

# THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAGAZINE

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# A Berber Wedding

Photographed by A. Costa

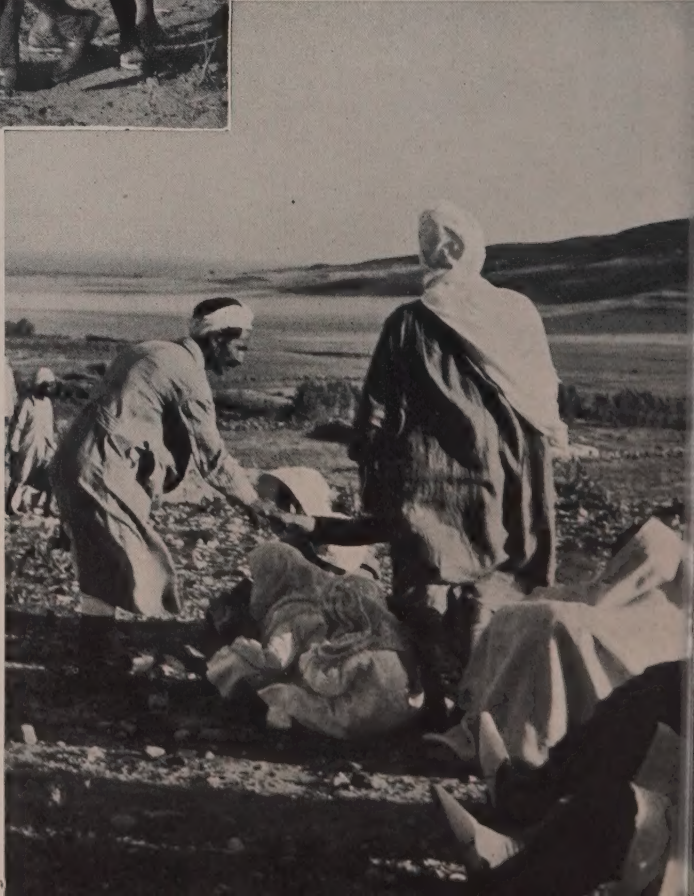


*A mixture of races inhabits the North African land between the Mediterranean and the Sahara; but its main ingredient, since the earliest times, has been the people known collectively as the Berbers. Whence did they come? No one can say. The origin of the Berbers remains forever lost in the obscurity of unwritten history; so little is known of them that even the derivation of their name is uncertain. It may have come from βάρβαροι, barbarians, or from the Barabara and Beraberata tribes spoken of in Egyptian inscriptions of the 17th and 13th centuries B.C. It is a tribute to their vitality and resource that the Berbers have managed to survive at all. Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs—all these in turn have subdued the Berbers to their yoke, and yet they*

*endure when the mighty empires that ruled them have long since crumbled into legend. Only the Arab influence now remains; and even in the face of progressive Arabization the Berber retains his language, his independence, his fair complexion (tanned deceptively by sun and wind) and, to a large extent, his abiding traditions. Attachment to ancestral customs is his dominant trait, and of these customs none is more persistently observed than the ceremonial of the wedding. The Berber wedding, a strange and unorthodox affair, which few Englishmen have ever witnessed, is illustrated by the following photographs. The picture above shows the bride, not radiant and smiling, but hidden in a wicker basket and half suffocated by blankets, being carried to the scene of the festivities, the hill in the background*

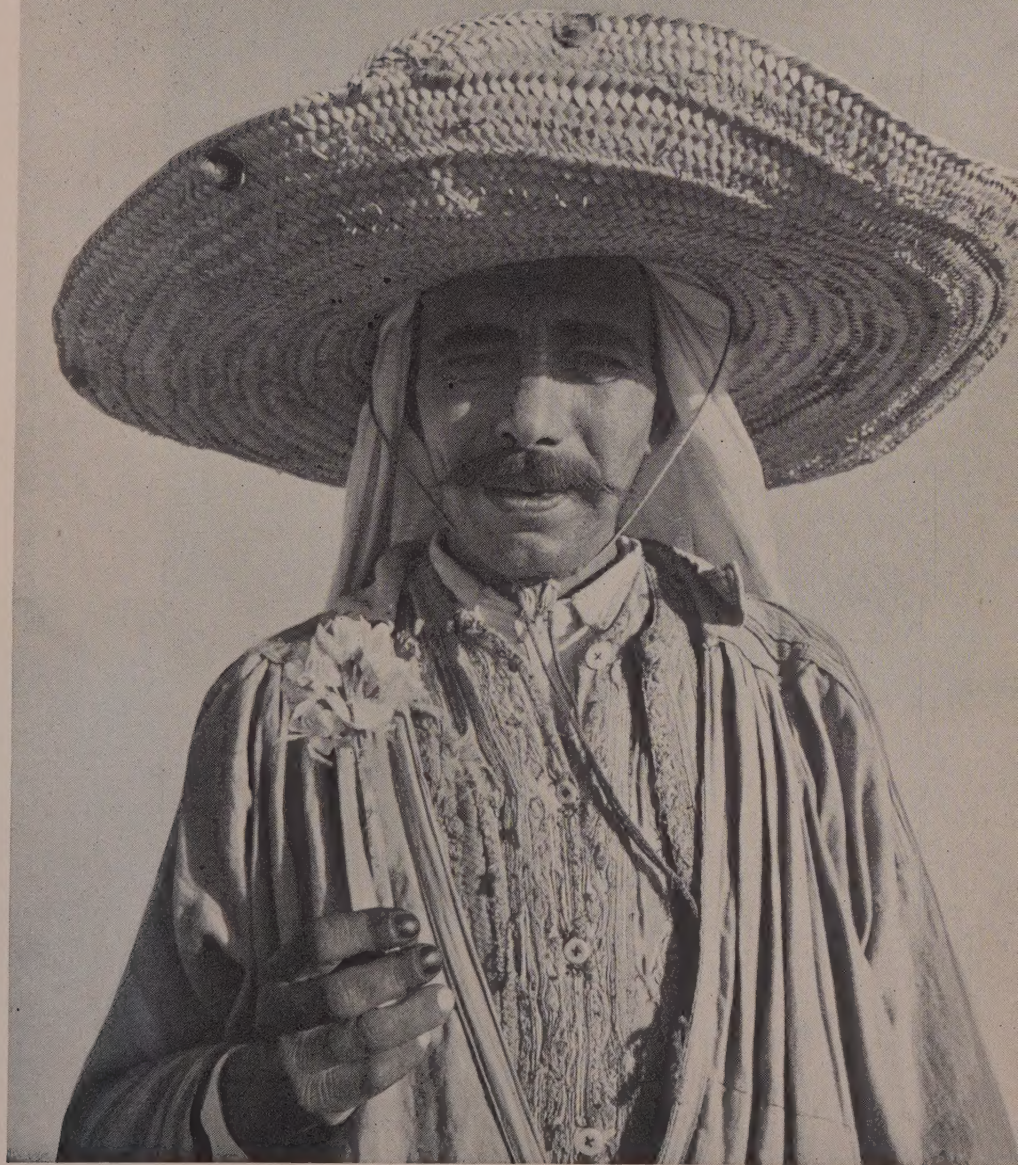


*Throughout the long and sultry summer afternoon the bride is submitted to the airless confinement of her covered cage, and before the time of her release she has probably fainted from heat and exhaustion. Her wedding day is hardly the happiest day of her life!*



*The merry-making does not begin until all the party is assembled at the appointed place. The real hosts and Masters of Ceremonies are the official dancers, usually father and son, who make their living by entertaining at all the weddings for miles around. One of the dancers is here seen greeting the guests, all of whom are requested to bring their own food and drink*





*The bride's father, who has dyed two of his nails with henna, holds a jasmine bouquet*





(Above) An inquisitive guest, who had peeped at the enshrouded bride, was set upon by the groom, and the two men had to be torn apart. (Below) The groom, handsome and happy, enjoys the best of the festivities; he carouses until far into the night, while his bride, guarded by her handmaidens, awaits his pleasure in the nuptial tent







*Until nightfall, when the dancers begin their performance, entertainment is provided by the chieftains of neighbouring tribes, who, balanced in their high saddles, give displays of horsemanship. The horses are lavishly arrayed for the occasion and their bodies are painted with spots of henna. The tempo of their prancing is set by two drummers*





*The Berber horsemen are well equipped to keep their audience in a constant state of admiration and alarm, for they have as many tricks in their repertoire as the famous Cossacks*



# Tunisia

by ALAN H. BRODRICK

*A great many articles have appeared lately about Tunisia, most of them dealing with the immediate political issues which have brought that country's name so prominently into the newspaper headlines. The following article, by describing Tunisia's place in geography, in modern (as distinct from classical) history, and in relation to the Moslem world of which Tunisia forms a part, fulfils The Geographical Magazine's policy of seeking to give its readers 'the background of the news'*

"TUNISIA", shouted the Fascist Deputies, when Count Ciano referred last November to Italy's 'natural aspirations'; and the cry was echoed in the Fascist press as well as in the streets of Rome. The attention of the world was thus drawn to a claim which is by no means new, but which France—master of Tunisia for nearly sixty years—is bound to resist.

A glance at the accompanying map will show the immense strategic importance of Tunisia. Not for nothing was Carthage the rival of Rome. The possession of Tunisia would enable the Italians to pinch the Mediterranean in two. All traffic from west to east, from Gibraltar to Suez, must pass between the Tunisian and Sicilian coasts, since the narrow Straits of Messina are entirely in Italian control. It is not much more than a

hundred miles from the nearest point in Africa to Cape Boeo in Sicily and this narrow arm of the sea is set with shoals and sandbanks and commanded by a small island called Pantelleria. Pantelleria has been heavily fortified in recent months. You may no longer fly over it. From the summit of its highest peak guns can rake the sea passage from side to side. From the submarine nests in its flanks shipping can be torpedoed. The Italians have, therefore, already a very strong position in this vital part of the Mediterranean.

Tunisia possesses the best harbour in the western Mediterranean — Bizerta, which could shelter the whole French and British fleets. In this Tunisian port, control of which is essential to the maintenance of France's sea communications with North







*Planet News*

*Since the recent public assertion of the Italian claims on Tunisia, France has strengthened her defences along the Libyan border. A detachment of Senegalese troops at Migram, near Gabès*

Africa in time of war, great reserves of oil fuel have been stored, ready to feed not only warships but one of the streams of motor traffic that would then flow across the Sahara. For if war broke out in Europe, the French would need to withdraw quickly from North Africa the troops best fitted for service on a European front, and to replace them with others from the French Sudan and West Africa.

While, as I shall show, no natural boundary divides fertile and populated Northern Tunisia from Algeria, the frontier between Tunisia and Libya in the south-east lies in the desert, the land of nomads and thirst. This frontier is heavily fortified. There are triple lines of defence, tank pits, barbed wire entanglements, rows and rows of steel rails set at angles to break attacks, pillboxes, casemates and forts. The French have about 30,000 soldiers in Tunisia and it is probable that no attack from the land

side has any chance of success. The Italian troops in Libya number perhaps 60,000 of which roughly half are centred on Tobruk, that is to say, towards the Egyptian frontier, and half are stationed in Tripolitania, looking towards Tunis.

These strategic dispositions loom large in the present unsettled state of the world. But they are merely a reflection of Europe on North Africa, as are the groups of French and Italian citizens that are sometimes mentioned in claims and counter-claims as if they were the sole inhabitants of Tunisia. The truth is that the population of French North Africa numbers nearly twenty millions and of this number the Europeans form a very small percentage. In Tunisia there are well over two million subjects of the Bey and, although the Italians contest the reliability of the French statistics, there are, probably, not more than 100,000 Italians and some 115,000 French.





Paul Pottier

*Tunisian Spahis, famous among French colonial troops; a Turkish corps until the French occupation*



Between this Italian block and the French block there is nevertheless a great difference in this sense, that the Italians are all Italians, since even the numerous Italian Jews of Tunisia did not know that they were not Italians until some months ago. The French population, on the other hand, is made up of French of France, French of Algeria, naturalized natives, Maltese, Jews and Italians to name only the most important groups.

Into the diplomatic disputes arising from the existence of these two European blocks in Tunisia we need not enter here. It will suffice to say that certain rights, notably that of retaining Italian citizenship, have long been enjoyed by the Italians, while the French have pursued with some success a policy of assimilating the other groups of European inhabitants. The number of French citizens increases more rapidly than the number of Italian citizens. More than half the latter were

born in Tunisia, and about a thousand of them have become naturalized Frenchmen every year. Most of the Italians are humble labourers from Sicily, Sardinia and Naples, and among the more prosperous members of their community the proportion of Jews is very high. These Jews, who form a professional class and an educated *élite*, are largely descended from Leghorn and Genoese merchants who emigrated to Tunisia before the establishment of the French protectorate in 1881. Since the anti-Jewish measures recently announced in Italy, thousands of them have applied to the French for naturalization papers.

Behind these latest immigrants into Tunisia lies the mass of its inhabitants, themselves in great part descended from immigrants of earlier centuries. The land in which they dwell is simply the eastern extremity of a homogeneous natural area—North Africa, roughly 1000 miles from the Atlantic to the eastern coasts of Tunisia. One is rather inclined to think of North Africa in terms of the Sahara or of Egypt. But the coastal regions of the country in fact resemble southern Europe. The environs of Algiers remind one of those of Toulon. Morocco north of the main chain of the Atlas looks very like Provence.

From the south of Morocco to the north-east of Tunis runs a range of mountains which cuts off from the desert the greater part of Morocco, the fertile north of Algeria and a small piece of northern Tunisia. The regions between the mountains and the sea are, for the most part, well watered and therefore fruitful. Wherever the rain falls marvellous crops can be gathered. The wonderful African sun makes the country rich: as the adage has it, North Africa is a cold country with a hot sun. South of the mountains comes the desert which until recent times formed a more formidable barrier to man's passage than any sea. The desert is a long way from Tangier in northern Morocco



A. Costa

*Links with Carthage still persist in Tunisia, where the same symbols found on Carthaginian tombs of 2500 years ago are used to ornament modern houses*





Lehnert &amp; Landrock

*From the site of Carthage, near the charming village of Sidi bou Said, one sees across the Bay of Tunis a double peak called 'the Horns', formerly a High Place of Baal*

and a short way from Tunis in northern Tunisia.

From the earliest times the chief inhabitants of this land seem to have been people who under many different names have shown remarkably persistent characteristics. These people, whom we now generally call Berbers, were probably closely allied to, or even identical with, the earliest historical inhabitants of the Nile valley. The Berber tongue shows some affinities with that of Ancient Egypt.

The Berbers have nowhere formed any permanent political organization. They have been dominated by Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines and Arabs, although it is only within recent times that the Arabization of the Berbers has gone on apace. Even a hundred years ago when the French occupied Algeria

they might have encouraged the use of the Berber tongue and customs and constituted a barrage against Arab influence. Taught by experience, the French are pursuing some such policy in Morocco, where much of the latent trouble has been caused by the reactions of the Arabic-speaking population against the accentuation of Berber nationality.

Mohammed died in A.D. 632. Less than 70 years later not only had Persia and the whole Near East accepted Islam but the Arabs had captured Africa and split the known world in two. It was Islam which blotted out the last traces of the civilization of Rome in Africa, broke the link between Rome and Byzantium and forced the Church to call in the northern world to redress the balance of the southern.

Roman civilization had still subsisted in



A. Costa

*Rome ousted Carthage in 146 B.C.; and such buildings as the ruined theatre at Dougga afford impressive evidence of the 800 years' prosperity that 'Africa Propria' enjoyed under Roman and Byzantine rule*

the states founded by the Barbarians within the limits of the Empire: they all acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of Rome. Within the borders of those states no essential change in land tenure, no new methods of tilling the soil had grown up; the great agricultural properties had changed owners but, for the most part, they had remained undivided. The same currents of trade and commerce flowed from west to east and from east to west. Greek, Jewish and Syrian merchants

abounded in the cities of the Occident. The sea routes across the Mediterranean were secure. Papyrus from Egypt, oil from Africa, spices and condiments from the East were necessary luxuries.

The triumph of Islam reduced Christianity to Europe. The Great Schism was hastened. The Church was cut off from the land of her birth. The Pope could no longer rely upon the Emperor at Constantinople. Rome could not look east, south or west. She had to look



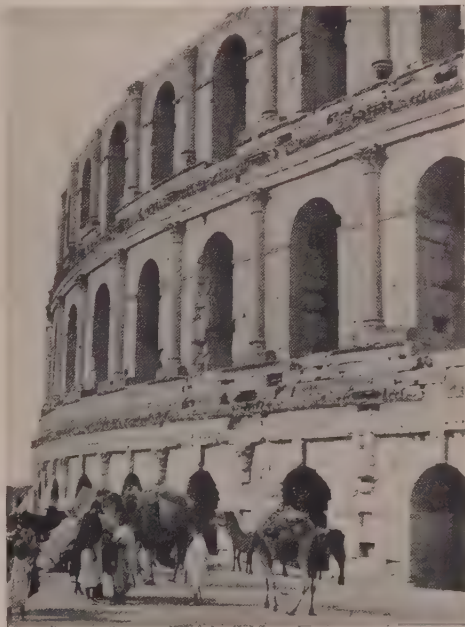
north, up the valleys of the Rhône and the Rhine, to Gaul, to Britain, to the Low Countries for protection, for material support and for new sources of spiritual strength. The east-west axis of civilization was slewed round to a north-south direction.

From the 8th century onwards commercial shipping was banished from the western Mediterranean until the Crusades restored in some measure the old trade connections. Foreign merchandise soon became unknown in the West. There was a drop in the standard of living and a regression in culture. Gold disappeared from circulation only to reappear when the mines of America flooded a changed Europe eight centuries later. The long Merovingian decline in Gaul was due to a decay of trade. Pepin's *coup d'état* divided the Christian world definitely in two and enabled his grandson to become Emperor of the West at a time when the territorial aristocracy was beginning to exercise increasing political power, when the towns were emptying into the countryside and when feudalism had become inevitable. As the great Belgian historian, Pirenne, has succinctly put it: 'Without Mohammed, Charlemagne would not have been possible'.

So long as Omar, the second Caliph, lived he would not allow the Arabs to venture beyond Egypt to the west; but his successor Othman ordered his governor at Cairo to subjugate the lands of *Maghreb* or the Occident. Nearest of these, beyond the Libyan desert, lay the former Roman province of Africa Propria, 'Africa *par excellence*', which the Arabs called *Ifriqiya*, roughly corresponding to the modern Tunisia. The Rumis—that is to say the subjects of the Byzantine Emperor—had maintained Africa Proper as the granary and oil-press of the Empire after the province had been reconquered from the Vandals by Belisarius in Justinian's reign. In Othman's time the Imperial Exarch, the Patrician Gregorius, had taken ad-

vantage of a particularly slack imperial administration to make himself almost independent.

The Arab leader, Ibn Sa'ad, rushed his troops along the coasts of Libya and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Byzantines. So great was the booty of Ifriqiya that the conqueror asked one of his captives what was the source of such astounding wealth. For an answer he was shown an olive. The Horsemen of Allah had made a rich prize. Ibn Sa'ad retired to Egypt but his fellow-countrymen soon came back under a Companion of the Prophet, Okba ben Nafi, who founded the Holy City of Kairouan at the geographical centre of the new Ifriqiya. Kairouan still ranks as a Holy City although its fame has long since faded. It was, for years, the centre of an Islamic empire which dominated the Mediterranean from the Straits of Gibraltar to Calabria.



Ré Richter

The amphitheatre at El Djem—500 feet in width, nearly as large as the Colosseum—is the most magnificent Roman structure in Africa



*Rd Richter*

*In the 7th century A.D. the rich prize of Africa Propria was wrested from the Byzantines by the warriors of Islam, whose vigour is attested by their early constructions. (Above) The 1000-year-old ramparts of Sfax. (Below) Kairouan, founded in A.D. 671, became the centre of an Islamic empire which was supreme throughout the western Mediterranean. It still ranks as a Holy City*

*Lehnert & Landrock*







*A. Costa*

*Leinert - Landa*



(Above) The successors of Okba ben Nafi, founder of Kairouan, established the main outlines of the Great Mosque and built the massive minaret which dominates its immense marble-paved courtyard. The whole edifice covers an area of more than two acres

(Left) The interior of the sanctuary is enriched by the varied materials of many rows of columns—marble, onyx, granite, porphyry—rifled by the Arabs from the pagan temples and early Christian churches of Carthage and the Roman cities

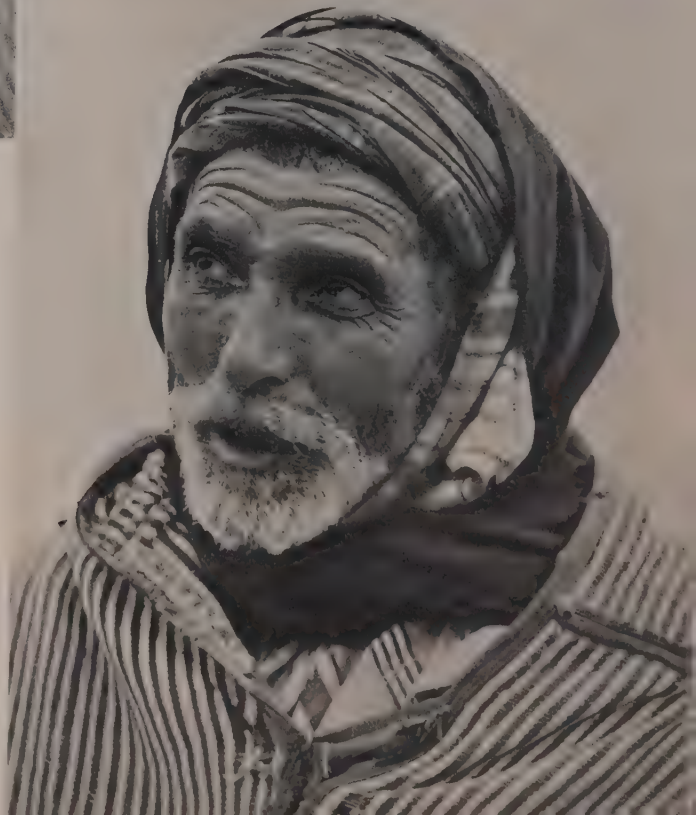


*So many waves of immigration have entered Tunisia, which lies at a junction of land and sea routes, that it has always been a melting-pot of peoples. Negro Africa has made a noticeable contribution: witness the features of this Beduin woman—*

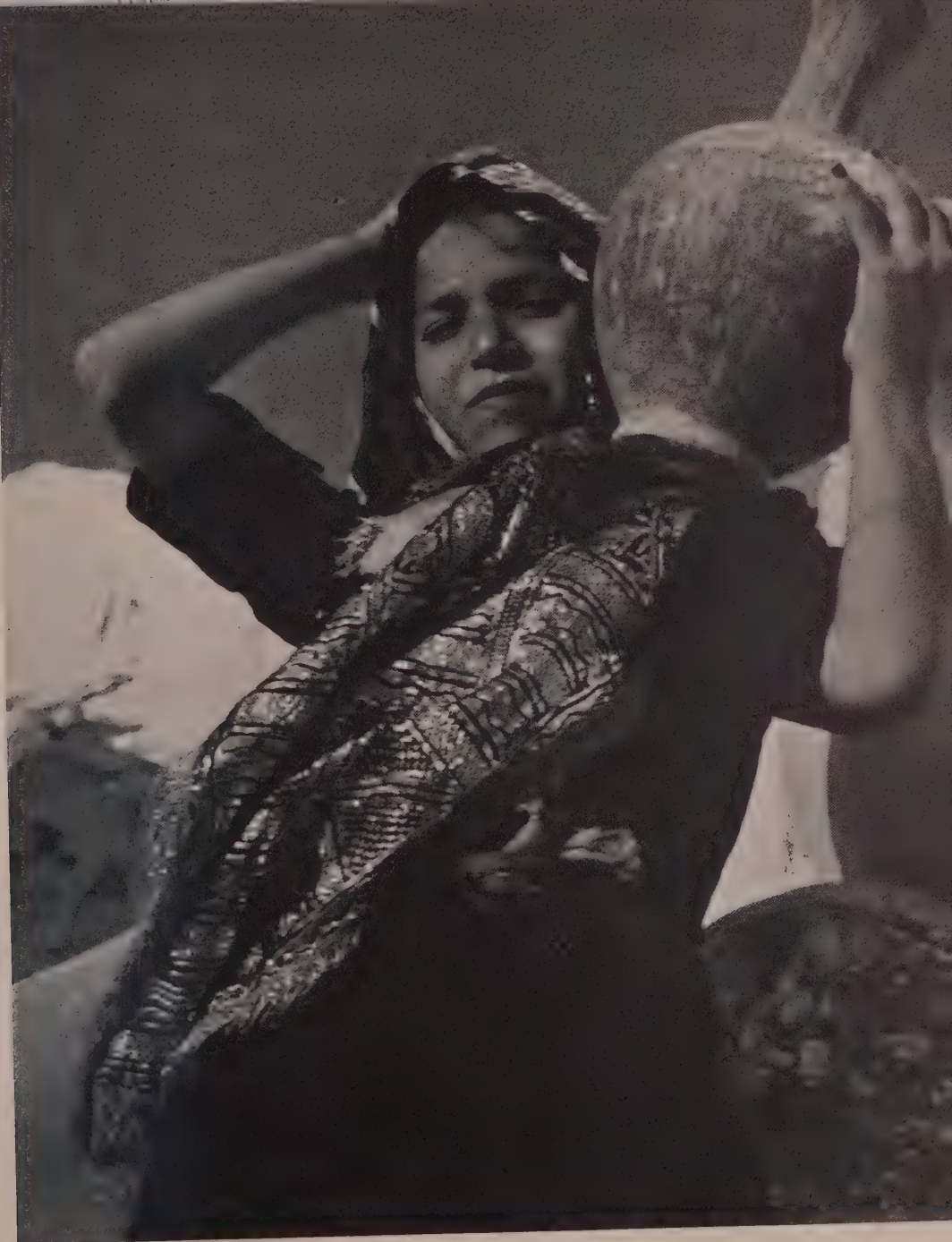
*Oscar Mar...*

*Paul Popper*

*while another strain is Nordic in appearance: 'some authentic subjects of the Bev might be mistaken for Scots-men'. The most readily distinguished racial group is that of the Berbers, whose family and tribal organization has preserved their identity despite successive conquests and conversion, first, to Christianity and then to Islam*







A. Costa

*Of a physical type common to the whole Mediterranean basin: a Tunisian girl who might just as well be a Spaniard, an Italian or a Greek*

The Berbers did not accept Islam at once or very peacefully. There were revolts but finally the country was pacified and life went on much as it had done before. The rulers in Kairouan were subject to the Fatimid Caliphs in Cairo, one of whom, to stifle a threatened revolt in Egypt, induced the wild Beduin tribe of the Beni Hilal to settle in Ifriqiya. These semi-savages swarmed over the country in the 11th century, ravaging all before them. Tunisia never recovered from the blow. The centres of gravity of the Arab world shifted to other points. There was some measure of recovery after the Turkish conquests in the 16th century but it was a flash in the pan. The land lay desolate and the olive groves disappeared.

At the beginning of the 18th century Hussein, the agha or general of the Tunisian janissaries, declared himself autonomous ruler of Tunis and, in fact if not in name, independent of the Sublime Porte. The reigning dynasty has never assumed any higher title than that of Bey and, although the French established their protectorate in 1881, the Turks did not relinquish their suzerainty until 1921.

There are today practically no Tunisians who have remained Berber-speaking, although in some places the population still claims to be of 'pure' Berber stock. The whole country has been thoroughly Islamized and there are few of the unorthodox practices and customs which linger in Morocco.

Islam is a religion upon which others make no impression. In no part of the world do missionaries have any success in evangelizing Mohammedans. In Mohammedan countries the faith of the Prophet gains on others. Every year over a thousand Coptic Christians in Egypt become Moslems. The famous 'White Fathers' have long given up any hopes they may have entertained of winning over the native population in North Africa.

The Prophet said "There is no priest-

craft in Islam"; and although the professors and expounders of the Law enjoy universal respect, every Moslem is his own priest and the tenets of his religion are of such transparent simplicity that they can be learnt in a few minutes. For the orthodox Mohammedan his religion is at once faith, science, law, art, literature and mode of life and the strength of the Faith is that it gives the faithful a feeling of superiority over other men.

We must not overrate the oft-vaunted unity of Islam. It is true that what happens in any one part of the Islamic world is soon known throughout it, but the lands of the Koran are torn by many conflicting opinions. The Berbers have always been non-conformist and individualist; and the Mohammedanism of North Africa has its special features such as the cult of Marabouts or saints, which was denounced by the orthodox in the early days of the Faith. In Christian times (for it must be remembered that the Berbers were once Christian) the various schismatic doctrines they espoused — Montanism, Donatism and others — were fiercely combated by the Church since they tended to minimize the role and thus undermine the influence of the clergy.

Underneath their Mohammedanism the Berbers have remained true to many of their old traditions. Even in Tunisia where Berber influence is difficult to trace, the crescent and the star, the hand of Fatimah, the fish, the double triangles and the eyes which you see today painted on ice-cream barrows or on the gaudily coloured Sicilian carts are the same symbols that you find on Carthaginian tombstones, 2500 years old, or tattooed upon the bodies of Berber women.

If you look from the hill once crowned by Carthage across the bay to where the last spurs of the Atlas fade into the sea, far in front of you rises a double peak called Bu-Karnain or the Horns. It was a High Place of Baal. The Romans raised an altar to Saturn between the points of





*Lehnert & Landrock*

*The oases towards the Algerian frontier, bathed in the brilliant light of the desert, attract many visitors. That of Nefta is famous for its prolific groves of date-palms*



*Lehnart & Landrock*

*The houses set among the 420,000 palms of the oasis of Tozeur have a peculiar geometrical ornamentation of sun-dried bricks in relief, recalling the brick palaces of Turin*



the crescent. Not far off on the slopes of the Djebel Djelloud is a burying-ground where Punic tombs, Roman sepulchres, Christian graves and Moslem cemeteries jostle each other.

Tunisia is a charming country with almost every variety of climate and scenery. It is small, about the size of Portugal, if one excepts the desert regions of the south. In Africa Proper you find the most imposing Roman remains outside Italy. The vast amphitheatre of El Djem is nearly as large as the Colosseum. Sbeitla, Bulla Regia, Dougga and Thurburbo Majus are all exciting reminders of imperial achievement.

The cities and the mosques of Islam are for the most part not on Roman sites. The invaders plundered the palaces of their predecessors but did not live in their shadow. Kairouan dates from the early years of the Arab conquest. Although nothing in French North Africa can surpass the Moorish monuments of Southern Spain, the mosques of Kairouan are living places of worship and three of them may be visited. The vast court of the Great Mosque, overshadowed by a massive minaret which is already half-Saharan, glitters and shimmers in a sunlight so intense that the white walls merge into the brilliant and colourless sky. In the so-called 'Barber's Mosque' the tiles of Tunisia, which modern craftsmen cannot rival, are so blended and faded that their soft richness is like a woven fabric.

South-east of the brown and arid plain of Kairouan lies Sfax by the sea, enclosed within thousand-year-old ramparts rimmed with swallow-tailed battlements. Like all the fortifications of Islam they strangely convey an impression that they enclose rich treasures.

Tunisia has always been a melting-pot of peoples and in the twisting streets under the shadow of the Great Mosque of Sfax you may see authentic subjects of the Bey who have blue eyes and might be mistaken for Scotsmen. The Kerkenna Islands

are not far off the coast. In them banished ladies from the Beylical harems found a refuge and the type of the hard-working and honest island population is very varied. You may note negroid features and Nordic ones in the same family.

There have been waves of immigration into Tunisia of the so-called Andalus, that is Mohammedan Spaniards, many of whom may have had in their veins the blood of those Vandals who gave their name to Andalusia. I have seen a beggar in the streets of Tunis who so much resembled a well-known Spanish Duke that one might take them for brothers.

Around Sfax are millions of olive trees planted under French direction, but southwards the countryside gets more and more barren. At Gabès, on the shore opposite Djerba—the fabled land of the Lotophagi—although you are in a large oasis of palm-trees you are on the edge of the desert. From Gabès if you motor towards Libya the scenery is quite Saharan. There are Beduin encampments everywhere. The tents of the nomads, their camels' trappings, their women's dress of





*Lehnert & Lau Inc.*



(Above) 'The bazaars or souks of Tunis still show the Turkish imprint. One of the most graceful mosque minarets rises from the midst of them; a bit of Turkey in Europe transported to Africa.' In the foreground is seen the flat roof covering the souks, dotted with the little windows by which they are lighted

(Left) Within, the souks give entrance to the warehouses of wealthy merchants or the mere niches in which the smaller fry sell their wares



dark blue with heavy silver pins and jewels have not varied throughout the ages and are the same as those in Arabia itself. These desert folk are the most attractive people in Tunisia. Their life is one long fight against drought, but they are frank and hospitable. Their unveiled women are always graceful and often beautiful in a savage yet suave way. The prevalent type is one with rather a broad face, high cheekbones, and a large mouth of splendid teeth. A curious, almost Mongoloid look is not rare.

Tunisia ends in a point just opposite the Italian post of Ghadames which was ceded by the French some years ago. Libyan territory marches thereafter with that of Algeria.

The great Chotts or salt marshes stretch in a chain westwards of Gabès. They are remnants of the lagoons and inland lakes which once covered the Sahara. North of these expanses of brilliant white, more blinding than any snowfield, and towards the Algerian frontier lie the delicious oases of Tozeur and Nefta, whence come the best dates. The curious house-façades of sun-dried bricks in relief remind one of Turin and its brick palaces.

From Nefta you can reach Touggourt and the wonderland of the Algerian south. The quality of the light and the limpidity of the air are the same all along the parallel from Luxor to Marrakesh in Morocco. Few other places on earth have such brilliance.

Northwards from Tozeur we might linger in the Roman ruins of Es-Sbeitla or in the curious catacombs of Sousse, the tile potteries of Nabeul or the orange and lemon groves of Hammamet on the way to Tunis. 350,000 of the two and a half million inhabitants of the Regency live in the capital. An agreeable modern town, built on land reclaimed from the lagoon, surrounds the old native city, which stretches from the monumental Porte de France to the citadel hill.

Living is not expensive and owing to the low customs duties one of the agreeable

surprises of Tunis is that you can buy a good Havana cigar for about sevenpence.

The shores of the Bay of Tunis are dotted with bathing beaches. Those towards the north culminate in the fascinating village of Sidi bou Said on the seaward cliffs of the Hill of Carthage. The whole hamlet was preserved as a museum by the late Baron d'Erlanger. At all seasons of the year the countryside is bathed in the indescribable African light. You can never for a moment forget that you are on the southern and not on the northern shores of the Mediterranean.

The old Beylical palace is at Le Bardo, a few miles from the capital towards the west. In its halls and courts is housed the richest museum in French North Africa: Punic tombstones, Roman statues and mosaics and the charming products of 18th-century Turkish art jostle each other. The whole history of Africa Proper passes before your eyes in a few minutes.

The bazaars or souks of Tunis still show the Turkish imprint. One of the most graceful mosque minarets rises from the midst of them; a bit of Turkey in Europe transported to Africa. You find yourself suddenly in Adrianople! These souks are famous throughout North Africa, for Tunis has what is wanting in Morocco or Algeria or Libya—an educated, cultivated and, it must be confessed, somewhat ungovernable middle class of merchants, lawyers and others who have maintained their property and position right through Turkish times.

The souk of the 'Attarin or Perfume Sellers is broad and spacious. Its roof is supported by columns painted gaily in red and green spirals. It is worth while sitting down in the small shop of a merchant, a little narrow box of a place. Our 'Attar is a man of exquisite courtesy and under a calm and suave exterior you will feel plenty of ironical wit. He has long, pale ecclesiastical hands and may be wearing the insignia of a high grade in the national order of the Nichan Iftikhar, for

the Prophet loved perfumes and the sellers of scents are held in high esteem.

In the intervals of weighing incense and sucking up scent into a glass tube and blowing it into phials, your 'Attar will tell you what he thinks you should hear about politics, the French, the Italians, women and religion. He will speak perfect French and express great admiration for French culture. He has often been to Paris and he admits that if sometimes the French chastise with whips the Italians scourge with scorpions. He affects a reasonable piety but opines that one must move with the times. He is all for constitutional government and says: "If the Egyptians have a parliament why should the Tunisians not have one?" He doesn't like to see so many French uniforms in the streets.

He will probably tell you that Tunisia would be a very different place if it had the privilege of being a British possession. He would say Dutch, German or Brazilian according to your nationality. He does not say (although he may hint) that the drought, the economic crisis, the high cost of living and the Destour movement are all due to the French.

Destour is a Persian word and means 'custom' or 'permission'. It is used as a label by the parties who advocate self-government. There are the old Destour and the new Destour. What the leaders of the former want is to throw out the French and to instal a sort of theocracy in which the 'ulema or professors of the law will have all the plums of the cake. What the new Destour want is a nice little parliament with all the attributes of parliamentary life on the European model—place, privileges, graft and commissions.

A better idea of what is really going on will be reached if you leave the perfumer and go to some cinema showing Egyptian films. Watch how the audience reacts to a news-reel of the Pilgrimage to the Holy Places, or listen to the applause with which everything Egyptian is greeted, from the image of King Farouk to that of boy

scouts and girl guides. If there is a talkie with Mlle. Um Kalthum singing, say, 'The Song of Hope' you will not notice much oriental impassivity.

The problems of Tunisia are those of all North Africa, complicated by the strategic importance of the country. No one will deny that there has been in the past a certain amount of exploitation of the native but, on the whole, the French have less to reproach themselves with than most imperial peoples. The situation in North Africa has been dominated for several years by a succession of bad harvests, and the devaluations of the franc have lowered the purchasing power of the native.

In present conditions it might almost be said that there are too many inhabitants in French North Africa. In Tunisia alone the native population has doubled during the fifty-eight years of French rule. (That of Libya has halved itself during the twenty-five years of Italian domination.) Only by the creation of a peasant class, and by attaching the native to the soil, can a living be guaranteed to all. If one half of the population leads a nomadic life, in the lean years there is bound to be widespread distress. The problem is being tackled in Algeria and Morocco as well as Tunisia and it is officially admitted that the most urgent task is that of the formation of a native *paysannat*.

After all, the fertile strip where crops never fail is comparatively small in area. French North Africa lacks fuel and it will not be, at any rate in the near future, the seat of any extensive industry. The riches of the land lie in its agricultural products, its oranges, lemons, olives, alfa, wine and tobacco, some of which, it must be confessed, directly compete with the products of metropolitan France.

Sooner or later it is probable that the French will have to make radical changes in the constitution of their North African empire. If the desert regions remain under military control, the rest of the





Paul Popper

*'Tunis has what is wanting in Morocco or Algeria or Libya—  
an educated, cultivated and somewhat ungovernable middle class.'  
These subtle bourgeois, spinning the web of politics in their  
cafés, set the French authorities many an awkward problem*



*The population of Tunisia has doubled itself in the 58 years of French rule, and it is the Government's most urgent task to ensure more stable conditions of living by creating a native paysannat*

country may be unified and made into a Dominion. The French are of infinite resource and it is certain that some way will be found to adjust this most important part of their empire to changed conditions. Moreover, the Frenchmen's task is everywhere facilitated by the sentiments they evoke in subject peoples. As Mr Somerset Maugham has remarked about the situation in Indo-China, if we British extort the respect of the peoples we dominate, the French are regarded with admiration by their subjects.

Thus one returns to the matter with which this article opened. There is no likelihood that any North African would want to exchange the overlordship of the French for that of the Italians. The methods adopted by the latter during the

conquest of Libya are fresh in mind, and if the Moslems of the rest of North Africa were in danger of forgetting them, the numerous Libyan refugees in Tunisia and in Egypt would see to it that the facts were remembered. Were France to surrender her position in Tunisia to Italy, the repercussions in the rest of her Moslem territories would be tremendous.

Those repercussions would also involve Great Britain. Strategy apart—and we cannot remain indifferent to the establishment of control by a single Power over the central Mediterranean—our failure to support France would be interpreted as a sign of weakness not only in Egypt and the Sudan but throughout the Moslem world, a world whose opinion is of vital importance to the British Empire.



# Corfu: Isle of Legend

by LAWRENCE DURRELL

*Familiar in tourist itineraries, not long ago a British possession, Corfu remains little known to the English public. Nor would many English visitors succeed in capturing, as Mr Durrell does, those varied essences of the Greek mystery which Corfu distils—groves that are yet nymph-haunted, bays that resound with Homeric echoes, sailors for whom magic lurks in every wave, sibyls whose pronouncements can bind and loose the hearts of men*

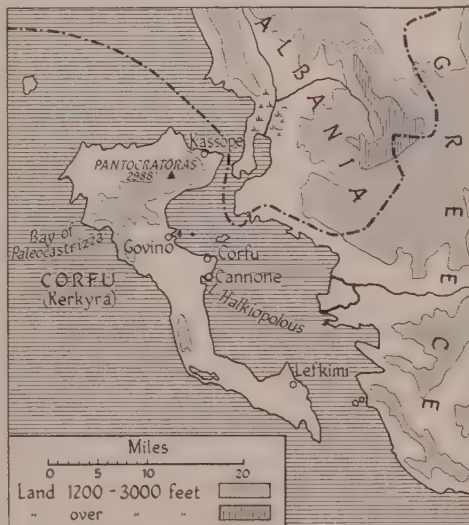
IT lies in the shadow of the Albanian snows, its yellow sickle dim in this late spring haze, as a vessel lies at anchor; northward looms the snout of Panto-cratoras, like the eroded sutures of a skull; southward the more kindly landscape slides downhill, dappled with cultivation to Lefkimi, the flat Calabrian-looking plateau inhabited only by deep-sea squills. Strictly speaking, it gives the impression of two islands, not one; the metamorphic northern balconies of stone, habitation only for the monk and the eagle, welded to the sleepy lowlands facing the mainland. To the north and west, vertebrae of stone, the unmistakable Grecian flavour; to the east, in the rich moist acres of cultivation, a polyglot, confusing atmosphere—Byzance, Venice, Turkey, Russia.

The town itself is enigmatic, various—some have said characterless; the architecture Venetian, confused by British-Victorian monuments, French adaptations, modern Greek scenic effects. The people shiftless, lazy, not to be trusted; all the vices and none of the virtues of six occupations. The Ghetto still speaks a private argot which has been identified with a Venetian dialect of the Middle Ages; the British have left behind them their traditional game, cricket, whose terminology has become with time nothing less than fantastic; the French a tradition for sparkle and gallantry; the Turks a hatred and fear which nothing will ever dispel.

But apart from these urban manifestations, the character of the Corfiots has remained a well-defined constant; since the Corinthian wars they have remained a contentious, difficult people: wrong-

headed, insular. If their island is Homeric, the fishermen of the northern coasts live up to the reputation history has given them; do not forget that Ulysses was washed up in the great bay at Paleocastrizza. The whole impetus of the island's history is contained in a phrase like that. At the mouth of Lake Halkiopolous you can still see the fate of the boat that took him home—spars, rigging, men, all turned to stone. The women still wash their clothes in the little stream that flows down by the hillock still called Atona, where the temple stood; the cypresses still arch in the wind by the deserted temple of Artemis.

The ancient pantheon still exists, though it has suffered a sea change. Charondas the ferryman has become Lord of Death in the place of Pluto; and in some of the



Stanford, London.



1911. Photographed by Thomas M. Warren

*'Where the nymph-haunted olives guard a well.' One of the lonely northern peasant wells, haunted after dark by a woman — perhaps a Homeric nereid, 'immortal in spite of time'*



mountain villages he has been turned into 'the black cavalier', the night-rider, who comes down from the sky, gathering little children at his saddle and trailing the old men after him into his kingdom—by the hair! In some places, however, the obol is still placed between the lips of the corpse before burial, indicating that the Ferryman has perhaps not altered his occupation, and still demands the fee for the crossing.

The Black Rider probably dates from the time of the Klephts, those doughty ruffians to whom Greece owes her present independence; the legends lie like geological formations in the people's consciousness, difficult to disentangle, difficult to assign to their correct period. The overlapping occupations have left behind them their debris of superstition; for example, the Venetians left behind them a headless negro to haunt the scorching swamps by Govino; the Turks, the ghosts of an eunuch and a young girl who walk by the full moon among the cypresses near Ypso, wringing their hands and moaning.

The patron saint of the island himself (Saint Spiridion) has a formidable reputation for miracles; during the Turkish invasions he performed innumerable feats of divine daring, stamping out armies, sinking flotillas, and decoying a grain-fleet to the island once when the inhabitants were on the point of starvation; the peasants cherish a unique faith in him, taking their diseases to the church, their hopes, their problems, more readily than to the doctors. Every year the wizened little mummy of the saint is carried in a progress round the town, bobbing and twitching, through the glass windows of his sedan-chair. To swear by his name is to swear the most solemn of oaths; to touch him is to be healed of the most intractable disease; to renounce him would be to become tied suddenly in knots by the four agues. But since the good saint is a busy man, and cannot be everywhere at once, complimentary charms against fate are favoured;

the cart-horses wear a necklet of beads as a protection against the evil eye; the priest confers a more orthodox blessing at certain times of the year, splashing the house with holy water from a cypress-twigg; amulets of terrific efficacy are bartered in the town.

Possession by devils is a phenomenon to be met with also; by great luck I was able to witness the possession of an old lady by the Fiend, a sight not only convincing and frightening, but one which did not seem to answer any medical descriptions of suggestive hysteria or epilepsy. The subject collapsed on the deck of a sailing-boat (she was on her way to the town), and became absolutely rigid, her features drained of blood until the flesh took on a strange mud colour. A moment of this rigidity and she began to tremble convulsively, and to utter the strangest of sounds—the hoarse, muffled barking of a dog. The fit lasted perhaps five minutes, perhaps slightly more.

Other cases of demoniacal possession have been recorded in which the Fiend spoke from the mouth of the subject in an unknown language (analogous to the 'pneumatic tongues' mentioned by St Paul). The exorcism service in Alexandrine Greek, chanted by an unlettered priest, however, is apt to be almost as bizarre as the phenomenon it is intended to destroy. Possession by devils is second only to possession by nereids; the penalties are not specified but they are grave ones. To a woman one can lose one's heart, but to a nereid a man will lose his soul.

On the deserted sand-beaches of the west coast at the full moon strange ceremonies are supposed to take place. The man who sleeps by the surf will be woken at midnight to see the salt, dripping figure of a woman standing ankle-deep in the foam. What they will say to one another is not told; but he will bring her back by morning to his village where he will marry her. Beautiful she will be, but

(Left) 'Northern balconies of stone,  
habitation for the monk and the  
eagle.' From his perch the old man  
can see (below) 'at the mouth of  
Lake Halkiopolous, the fate of the  
boat that took Ulysses home to Ithaca'







Above 'A sea like silk', ruffled by  
the north wind. It is easy to believe,  
with Nicholas the sailor-right,  
that from such a sea the unknown  
goddess may rise in the shape of  
a serpent, and require an answer

dumb; and barren also. But should anyone by chance ask her the fatal question "What is your name?" she will disappear down to the sea by night, leaving behind her a curse on the husband's family and on his descendants.

Midday and midnight are the two fatal times for charms to take effect; sleep in the shadow of a cypress at either time and you will awake mad: a tonic madness which will give you the second sight necessary to see goblins, the nereids who sit and watch by the deserted springs, and the great god Pan, who is by no means dead.

For the mountains there is one set of legends; for the lowlands another; and for the sailor his own nostrums against evil at sea.

The patron saint presides over all of them. With his image nailed to the prow a man can be sure of a smooth journey across these blue waters, among the islands where the cypresses nod. Nicholas the old sailor (whose portrait appears here) declares that when he puts out with his amulet, the good saint locks up the narrow seas and chains up the north wind. He considers himself personally favoured.

But there are other eventualities to be considered, such as waterspouts. A very special technique has been invented for dealing with these. Each craft carries on board a black-handled knife: and when a waterspout has been sighted the captain sends below for it. Seizing it in his right hand he carves on the deck a sacred pentacle; and then, aiming the blade of the knife, like a revolver, at the middle of the column of water, he intones the first phrases of the Demotic Bible:

Ἦεις την ἄρχην ἔταν ὁ Λόγος  
καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἔταν ὁ θεός

The desired effect is produced; the waterspout breaks, and the ship can run safely on her harbour.

To sail at the full moon also demands a measure of caution; the Ionian is haunted

by the unknown goddess, who rises like a serpent beside a boat and calls out, in fearful tones: "And how goes it with Alexander?" Should she receive no reply she is liable to overturn the boat with a gesture of rage; the only answer which will avert tragedy is: "He lives and reigns still". For the benefit of fair-weather Ionian sailors, the Demotic text of the formula is appended.

Q: Τὶ γίνεται ὁ Ἀλεξάνδρος;  
A: Ζεῖ καὶ βασιλεῖει

Nicholas the sailor insists on the necessity of learning this charm. "Because," says he, "an angry sea is simply water—but an angry goddess is a woman." No one who has sailed by moonlight under the Venetian forts, on a sea like silk, would ever disbelieve him. Charms against fate are necessary here in a landscape where the harbours are few, and the villages perched on the ribs of the mountain inaccessible; where a journey of twenty miles by sea seems equal to a journey across a continent.

At Kassope in the north the ruins of the Tiberian fort are overgrown with arbutus and asphodel; the walls gnawed by the weather. At dawn on certain days, however, the inhabitants of the little town, huddled beneath, have heard the hob-nailed tread of Roman centurions and seen the flash of bronze at the fents and loopholes; at Halkiopolous in the south (the Phaecian port, the γλυκὺς λιμὴν of Dion Cassius) the petrified barque of Ulysses has been known to move: oars have been seen beating; and the whole island, impelled by them, has started out for Ithaca with its royal guest. By morning the tragedy has happened again. The cypresses sprout from the broken walls of the monastery; the rats scuttle in the dark outhouses. Masts, rigging, shields, men—they have been turned back to stone again.

On the long white road which skirts the Venetian salt-pans and leads to the town, the man who walks in the siesta-hour runs





*'On a rock reclin'd, the dark prophetic sibyl you shall find:  
She sings the fates . . . ' An oracle of the Corfiot peasantry*



*Olive-groves by the shore.  
'To thee, twin-horned Ionian  
Pan', runs the invocation,  
'mixing Chthyptes cheese with  
red honey, I place it on thy  
sacred altar.' The altar is gone,  
but Pan still visits the glades*



*Twilight in a northern harbour.  
The boats have been snugged down,  
and the catch divided; the chaff-  
ing men have dispersed. Soon dark-  
ness will stain the rim of the sea*



*A sailing vessel carrying Corfiot peasants to town in fair weather, along with a cargo of olives, cherries and walnuts. The passengers include Satan, who is shortly to take possession of an old woman*



*Modern Corcyrean maidens, 'daughters of the grey-eyed one'. Homeward bound, these two collectors of mussels and hermit-crabs rest a moment on the cliff-path*

the risk of a meeting with the Three Women; if their beauty is not enough to move him they will try other means of getting him to speak to them. They will even take up sticks and belabour him silently where he stands: and if he should so much as open his mouth and speak a syllable he will be struck dumb for the rest of his life. Pan himself has a private dancing-glade above Cannone, deep among the cypress and olive trees, where the peasants do not dare to venture; it is close by the Traveller's Spring, which gushes out of an apparently blank rock-face and dribbles down towards the sea. Drink of this water and return, they tell you; for once having drunk of it you will always come back to the island. The charm is on you.

In the spring the turtle-doves arrive, and the hills echo with their plaintive, insistent note, whereby hangs a legend—perhaps the most beautiful of all of them.

In some of the remoter parts of the island these are known as *deka'ktures*, which means literally 'eighteeners' (δεκα'κτο). They say that when Christ was on His way to the Cross, a certain soldier in the crowd, seeing His distress and pitying Him, tried to buy a bowl of milk from a woman standing nearby. Now she was crying at the top of her voice, "Eighteen a bowl!". And the soldier when he came up to her was met by this same insistent cry; and on searching about he could only muster seventeen coins to pay for the milk he wished to buy. All attempts to bargain with the woman failed; to his entreaties she only returned the harsh cry "*deka'kto*, *deka'kto*". Accordingly she was changed into a turtle-dove, to cry her wares forever,

in a lower and more melodious key, to be sure, but just as insistently as ever, among the fields. That is the legend; and to it they add, with perhaps just a touch of malice, the belief that should the turtle-dove ever, by mistake, cry 'seventeen' instead of her customary 'eighteen', the end of the world would be at hand.

The legends are alive here because they form an intimate part of the Greek peasant's daily life; and not merely alive but necessary to a people which lives in a world so violent in its colour, so terribly lonely in its scenery—a world in which a belief in God is as imperative as a belief in His dark opposite, the Devil. Among these long olive-glades anything is possible; and if it has been said that the ancient Greek legend is dead, it is only because it is almost unrecognizable under its patina. But legend itself lives; and by it the people themselves no less than their scenery become legendary, fabulous.

Here is an island where garlic is still prophylactic against the evil eye, the fingers of the toad against possession by demons; and superimposed upon these folk-superstitions are the lovely aerial sculptures of the ancient world; the mother of Gorgons with her belt of snakes from the temple of Artemis (now alas! a museum piece); the deserted bays where Nausicaa played with the court maidens; the long yellow coastline stretching down into the blue towards Xante and Crete, alive under this sky as flesh is alive.

The traveller who climbs the Corfiot olive-groves to drink from the Traveller's Spring must find out sooner or later the uselessness of the act; the difficulty is not to return to Corfu, but to leave it.



# The Gilles of Binche

by SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

*Carnival time brings strange scenes in many parts of the world. A year ago the Fasching masks of the Black Forest enlivened our pages. Now we present two widely separated, yet curiously connected carnival celebrations: a Belgian kermesse in which the performers' dresses are based on those of American Indians; and a Mexican fiesta in which the participants, mainly of Indian blood, wear 19th-century French military costume*

THERE is no country in the world today where municipal life and, in particular, municipal frivolities persist so valiantly as in Belgium. Just as the great country house and its diversions symbolize the history of England, so does the Belgian market square and its inevitable *kermesse* epitomize the vicissitudes, both stern and fantastic, which the Catholic Low Countries have known in these last few centuries. Almost every Belgian town of any antiquity has its particular festival and of them all, the Kermesse of Binche, the subject of the present article, is at once the most famous and the most curious.

Binche is nowadays an outwardly nondescript little town of some 5000 inhabitants, planted in the middle of the Belgian Black Country, commanded at every point by slag-heaps, and given over to the trade of ready-made tailoring. In the Renaissance, however, it was a place of some wealth and distinction; it was dignified too by the residence of Queen Mary of Hungary, sister to the Emperor Charles V, and regent for him of the Low Countries. Here, in her graceful new palace among the then green fields, she gave in the summer of 1549, for her imperial brother, a party, the splendours of which were remembered in Belgium and in Spain more than a century after.

According to a contemporary account—*Della Gloriosa e Trionfante Entrata del Serenissimo Principe di Spagna in Bainz*—a special feature of the occasion was dancers dressed in exotic costumes and wearing scarlet-tipped plumes that towered to the

heavens. It is virtually certain that these revellers were the prototype of the modern 'Gilles de Binche'.

There is a local legend that these plumed dancers commemorated the conquest of Peru, news of which is supposed to have reached the Emperor while he lay at Binche. Alas for tradition! The Kingdom of the Incas had been reduced some twenty years before these famous festivities; the probability is therefore that the dancers merely represented in general the Emperor's new American dominions.

Endless controversy has raged over the subject of the present Gilles. One school has held that the Gilles are a comparatively modern phenomenon dating from the late 18th century; and in support of this idea, they point out that there is no mention of Gilles in the town records before about 1790, and that the tune to which they dance must obviously belong to about the same period. The dress and habits, however, of the Gilles proclaim on close examination an ancestry infinitely more remote than this.

The costume is of pale yellow with heraldic designs upon it (the Lion of Hainaut, etc.) in black and red. Among these signs there figures prominently a representation of the sun—a symbol which has little significance in modern European folklore, but which still plays a most important part in the ceremonies of various Indian peoples in Peru. The hats from which the great feathers spring are in shape somewhat like top-hats, and richly garnished with white violets. The base is always adorned with a golden spray of corn, a detail which constantly

recurs in the ceremonial dress of Indian fertility dances from Bolivia to Mexico. In fact the general costume of the Gilles, and indeed their strange syncopated dance, bears so close a resemblance to Indian festive dances (such as the widely distributed Apache Dance of the Mexican tableland and the celebrated Plume Dance of Oaxaca) that almost no doubt is possible as to their origin; while the padded jerkin which gives the dancers an air of enormous hunchbacks is almost certainly a reminiscence of the famous quilted armour of the Aztecs, filled with the feathers of tropic birds.

The corporation of the Gilles is a close, jealous one into which no 'foreigner' can enter, nor any 'Binchou' for that matter, unless he has the vocation. There are 500 Gilles, and throughout the year they practise and save up for the great occasion. Then on the Saturday before Shrove Tuesday the drums begin to beat 'dub-a-dub, dub-a-dub' among the slag-heaps and the tram-lines and before the tailors' shops; the costumes are put on, and the heads are bound with the strapping that helps to take the weight of the plumed hats; these will not be donned till the great day itself.

That night the Gilles begin to dance, going for the most part through the alleyways of the town with no music but the insistent drum; and the elderly Gilles who can no longer support the rigours of the affair twist unhappily in their cold beds. As the week-end wears on, the pace quickens. Foreigners arrive, and when Tuesday comes the great hats are put on; the market-place is filled with a clamorous crowd that attack you with bladders, and with pierrots designed only to divert you.

As twelve o'clock approaches, the sun, for a precious moment, makes his appear-

ance. Someone says "The Gilles are coming"; and you look down the street leading from the Grand' Place. There, far away, you see what looks like a tropic forest making its way slowly toward you. As it advances, the great plumes begin to tremble; their mauve and green points flash in the pale winter light. Then, to a strange monotonous music of drum and fife, the Gilles invade the Place, 500 of them, grown men, youths and even small boys. The ranks break up into single file, and the Gilles, dancing always their queer syncopated step, circle round the market-place. At this point you realize why the window you are looking out of, as indeed all the others on the Place, is protected with rabbit-wire; for the Gilles begin with oranges a savage bombardment of every window they can reach.

For one brief moment, the whole company of Gilles are dancing together; a moment later, the tossing plumes no longer have much significance, and a black crowd invades the square. Here and there you see a Gille towering with his lovely plumes among the rabble; and as the music dies down and the plumes are doffed, the world takes on a prosaic air once more.

The Binchoux settle down to the ordinary business of carnival—horseplay, kisses, the hawking of trash; the Indies fade away; you see once more the cobblestones, the tram-lines, the mean buildings; but suddenly, above the shrieks and giggles of the crowd, you hear the drums 'dub-a-dub' down the alleys and side streets. The Gilles have not finished yet. When night falls they come back, without their plumes, though still beautiful and sinister. The day ends in a sort of delirium: the whole town is dancing; and then at last Binche goes to sleep for another year.

*The dance of the Gilles of Binche and details of their remarkable costume are shown in the following Photogravure Section*





*Studio Ed.*

While the Gilles assemble, children dressed as pierrots, in pale blue or mauve, entertain the crowd





















*Photo: L. Dumas*

The weight of the plumes worn by the Gilles imposes a terrific strain on the neck muscles



# The Carnival of Huejotzingo

Notes and Photographs by Rodney Gallop



*The motorist who happened to be driving on Shrove Tuesday morning from Mexico City to Puebla would scarcely believe his eyes when he came to the little town of Huejotzingo, at the foot of Popocatepetl. As he entered the pueblo the sound of shooting might make him wonder if civil war had not broken out overnight, and in the market square he would probably be held up by a host of strangely masked and costumed figures, marching round the plaza or doing battle amongst themselves with ancient muzzle-loaders and a great expenditure of gunpowder. There is nothing in Mexico quite like the Carnival of Huejotzingo, in which nearly the whole male population of the town takes part, marshalled into different groups*



Stanford, London.



*In its present form the Carnival partly commemorates the victory won at Puebla in 1862 over the French forces on what has now become the national holiday of May 5*



*The French had newly embarked on the military intervention which culminated in the ill-fated imperial venture of Maximilian and Carlota, and their forces in the Carnival are led by a mounted General, whose white mask contrasts oddly with the Indian brown of his hands*





*The French forces are divided into two groups, the Zapadores who wear black beards, agrons and the tall bushes of nineteenth-century Sappers -*



*—and the Louaves who seem to have made a deep impression on the Mexicans. As portrayed in the Carnival the Louaves wear red and blue uniforms, leather masks which are a clever caricature of white features and knapsacks with the legend : Viva Francia!*

*The Mexicans are a more motley crew. First come a group rather misleadingly called Apaches, whose costume imitates that of ancient Aztec warriors. They wear plumed head-dresses and skirts, and their faces or masks are daubed with gruesome war-paint*



*They are accompanied by their own musicians whose robes are embroidered with the Eagle and Serpent device of Mexico. The instruments which they play are a strident clarinet and a drum of pre-Columbian type called the huehuetl*





*This Apache wears a head-dress ornamented with a representation of an Aztec Tiger Knight*



*Two other groups are included in the Mexican forces: the Serranos and the Zacapoaxtlas. The Serranos (above) wear battered hats and rough hairy masks, utter raucous cries and carry on their backs the stuffed skunks associated with the folk-fools who accompany many Indian dancers. The Zacapoaxtlas (below and on page 337) are incongruously clad in broad hats with bunches of paper streamers and in skirted tunics of black, white and green, cut short to reveal frilly white drawers*





*Intermittent battles between the various groups are fought throughout the morning, but towards noon a counter-plot is introduced concerning Agustín Lorenzo, a semi-mythical bandit who used to pillage travellers from Mexico City to Vera Cruz at Rio Frio. According to legend the bandit used to keep a white maiden captive, sealed up in a cave. One day he did not return, and his mistress died of starvation*



*The capture of the Lady, or rather her elopement with the bandit, is enacted at Huejotzingo. She is dressed in an elegant pink skirt and petticoats, while a white plume and a piece of butter-muslin transform a man's sombrero into a smart toque. A long white veil conceals her decidedly masculine features. The robber band ride up in a swirl of dust and the lady lowers herself by a rope from the first-floor balcony (above) onto a waiting horse (below)*





*From this point the rival armies are united in opposition to the eloping couple. Firing revolvers, with the lady in the rear, the bandits gallop off under heavy fire above. In the afternoon, however, fate overtakes them. The troops have traced them to a straw hut in the middle of the plaza. They close in with a deafening fusillade, and the hut goes up in flames and smoke (below), thus bringing to an end one of the liveliest and most entertaining fiestas of Indian Mexico*





# Popular Art in Poland

by LOUISE LLEWELLYN JARECKA

*Artistic production rarely plays any part in the life of the Western wage-earner. This is by no means the case in countries where the land still maintains an almost self-supporting peasant population; and, while such countries may not be able to afford a high material standard of living, they possess in their peasant arts a treasure which, in Poland at least, is being used to enrich and fertilize a wide field of national economy*

*Pronounce c like ts; cz like tch; j like y; sz like sh; and w like v*

In the remote villages of Poland, the thatched cottages nestle upon the earth so closely that they seem rather to have grown out of it than to have been set there by human hands. He who sees them thus is aware of a timeless quality about them and their inhabitants—a quality as old as the earth itself, which Western Europe has outlived. It is as if these people had guarded a dream within them, had tended in the depths of their souls a fire springing from origins too ancient for us to remember. Drawing on such inward resources, the Polish peasants have preserved in their humble arts something of the same rhythmic vibration in colour and form, of the same instinctive feeling for the threefold relation between use, design and material, that is revealed by the objects found in Egyptian tombs and in the composition of ancient Greek vases.

Of this traditional, archaic rhythm no better example can be shown than that of the embroideries of Polesie, the large province lying between the sources of the Pripiet and Poland's eastern frontier. These Polesian embroideries, in which a characteristic all-over stitch is so finely applied that a stranger often mistakes it at first glance for weaving, have a hypnotic flow, a completeness and an inevitability comparable to the theme of an old chant. They are composed of geometric and symmetrical figures which descend directly from the Stone Age.

Polesian art owes its integrity, in part, to the inaccessibility of the country. Polesie is a wild district, the most sparsely

populated in the whole of Poland, a country of swamps and quicksands, of forests where wolves and boars and wild cats are at home. Within the marshes, the Polesians have always lived aloof, persisting in their primitive ways. Gradually, as Poland improves her communications, measures are being taken for the comfort and literacy of these people; but there are still few railway lines, and travel is principally by boat, occasionally by horse. In some parts it takes several days to travel a hundred kilometres, and in others the cattle are brought to and from their pastures in boats. The grass is cut by men who stand knee-deep in water; it is piled upon improvised bridges and is not hauled home until the frosts begin to fall. Both men and women wear white linen, em-





*Z. Chometowska*

*The inaccessibility of certain regions of Poland has helped to preserve at full strength their markedly different local artistic traditions. One of the strongest is that of Polesie, where the villages, thatched and fenced with reeds gathered from the surrounding marshes, are often isolated by floods*

*Photo-Plat, Warsaw*







Henryk Poddebski

*A wooden bell-tower which displays the Polesians' instinct for proportion and design*



*Danda Josef*

*Self-supporting amidst their mountains, the sturdily independent Huculs maintain a culture of great originality. Their products of inlaid wood and brass-studded leather find a ready sale among tourists*

broidered with reserve, their blouses fastened at the neck with one wooden button. Their linens are often of a fine texture, and old pieces have been found of a gossamer web that could be drawn through a ring. The women embroider their aprons with wide borders of red or black.

Striking contrasts are to be found in Poland between the north-east and the south-west—contrasts in agricultural tools, in potters' wheels, in styles of roofing and the construction of villages, in harnessing, in methods of ploughing. In the north-east the dances are of uneven measure, the dresses are long, their colours dark and sombre. In the south-west the dances are in even time, the dresses are short, their colours cheerful and brilliant.

Besides these, there are differences distinguishing all the tribal units of Poland, shown clearly in the popular arts and

in habits or dress. For instance, the art of the Huculs, in the south-eastern Carpathians, is crude and virile, symbolic of the men themselves, who are rough, adventurous, hot-tempered, meridional in type, dwelling in small homesteads in the folds of the mountains. The wooden house and its sheds are built around a hollow square, with a little roofed gateway on one side. For their textiles the Huculs have always used more wool and hemp than flax; they still make to-day hempen textiles of a heavy magnificence, woven with decorative stripes of the wool of the brown sheep, which one can buy from time to time in the market-places of the neighbouring towns and villages for a few zlotys. They are famous for their rough woollen blankets, which have sequences of stripes, or designs in diamond shape, and fringes on both ends.



The Hucul region has suffered much from the introduction of cheap chemical dyes and, indeed, from all sorts of inferior merchandises widely sold in tawdry bazaars at the trade centres throughout the mountains; so that in these days the brown and white or the grey and white from the undyed wool are the most attractive colours and combinations.

With the simple, massive textiles of these sturdy mountaineers contrast the delicate fabrics made by the Kurpians, inhabitants of the virgin woodland between the rivers Bug and Narev. The Kurpians possess an ancient and exquisite skill in embroidery and lace-making. Their designs take the forms of circles and spots, of chains and interlacings, of haughty, stylized palmettes in varied patterns—very different from the stripes and diamonds found on the heavy Hucul

fabrics, and different, too, from the long Polesian friezes of figures and symbols. But the Kurpian needle-woman exercises her own free and personal interpretation within the disciplined form of ancestral conventions; she is imaginative, happiest when inventing or improvising on a classical theme. It is difficult even to obtain a symmetrical luncheon-set, because the artisan's creative passion does not permit her merely to repeat a single design throughout. The Kurpians are a people of distinctive characteristics, with manners and speech of their own, and a highly original and elegant costume. The head-dress of their women is incomparable for style and beauty. It is tall and cylindrical like a man's top-hat, ornamented with a proud and starched bunch of gaily coloured flowers.

Thus among these three tribes, the



FRANK P. P. P.

*The Huculs' economy is a pastoral one. Besides sheep and cattle they possess small horses of a peculiar breed reputed to be of remote Mongolian origin which are a favourite of their masters.*



P.A.T.

*Woodland seclusion has fostered an exquisite artistic skill among the Kurpians. Its keynotes include embroidery, wall decorations of cut paper, and a brilliantly distinctive head-dress*



Polesians of the swamps, the Huculs of the mountains and the Kurpians of the woodlands, the differences in the popular arts are unmistakable even to the casual stranger. I have chosen these three at random, but I could show the same diversities existing among the other tribal units that go to make up Poland, such as the mountaineers of the Tatras, western neighbours of the Huculs; the Kaszubians on the Baltic; the Silesians on the western frontier; the Podolians and Volhynians to the extreme east; the inhabitants of Vilno, Novogrodek and Bialystok, near the Lithuanian border to the north-east; the Cracovians of the south-west; and the Masurians and the Kujaviaks of the great plain that includes Warsaw.

All these people speak different dialects. Their conceptions of form and colour, of melody and dance and dress are definite and regional. The costumes worn by the men of the Tatra mountains, tailored by native artisans, are of the heavy white felt peculiar to the region. They are worn with pride, because of the admiration they have drawn from the artists, with whom the peaks and precipices and bottomless lakes of the mountains, enveloped in legend, have been favourite haunts for generations. Across the ridges to the east, the Huculs also abide by their native raiment—red and brown cloth, black or white sheep-skin. In Lowicz, near Warsaw, the men's costumes are faithful reproductions of those of the Pope's Swiss Guard, adopted several centuries ago by the peasants when some bishop was seated in the district.

Many such differences of taste and aspiration are due to secrets and customs of clan, lost somewhere in an undiscernible past; and many are due to topographical characteristics, to qualities of soil and climate, to the external environment that influences men's occupations and their tempers. The sum of them has given to the country a rustic art astonishingly rich in variety, of superior features and of an

enduring vitality. Much of the best in Polish popular art has resisted ignorant exploitation, has escaped the evils, common to every continent and State, of becoming shallow and commercialized. And in some cases it is sustaining, or helping to sustain, its creators.

These are the remarkable things about it: that it is not limited to the museums; that it does not depend upon artificial resuscitation in schools where young peasants are taught an imitation of their forgotten birthright; that, although traditional, it is contemporaneous, a veritable cross-roads of past and present. Only a few years ago it was feared that the inherent skill and invention of the peasant were all but lost; yet the most recent experiments have led to their hiding places. Even in the young people of the villages the transmitted spark, although dimmed, is often not yet extinguished.

There are not, to be sure, many groups or families of peasant artisans that could have withstood indefinitely the corruption of modern civilization, serial production, mechanical standardization and the many other devices which the modern world has evolved to save men from thinking and creating. Nevertheless, the integrity of their arts was preserved by their own vitality, which was strong enough to recruit its defenders.

The first eminent champion of the peasant artisan in the modern world was a man named Kamil Cyprian Norwid. He was a great poet and philosopher. He lived and wrote before Ruskin in the middle years of the 19th century; and he moulded the science of aesthetics in Poland. He was the first to proclaim the poetry of the hand, to accord it a place of dignity in the hierarchy of the arts. He left as legacy to his intelligent compatriots this clear vision. He told them that art was to be found not only in a frame, but also in a chair, in a vase, in the embroidery on a peasant's blouse. He said that the plastic arts were being separated



P.A.T.

(Above) Although they were the first Poles to pass under Prussian rule, the Kiaszubian fisher-folk of the Baltic have retained their native characteristics unimpaired. (Below) A wedding celebration near Lowicz. The girls' dresses are beautifully woven with stripes of orange, green and red

Photo-Plat, Warsaw







*Henryk Poddebski*

*Contact with outside influences has but served to increase the cultural and racial pride of the Gorals, highlanders of the Tatras, which have been the haunt of artists for generations.*



*The men, especially, delight in showing off their embroidered skin-tight trousers of white felt and releasing their temperament in the dance*

from the crafts, and that the art of that day was, therefore, failing to fulfil its purpose. He declared that in those periods of history when art was greatest, no division existed between what is known as the art of the hand and that of the intellect.

There were not many who heeded Norwid. Already, due to the realignment of social strata through the development of the mechanical industries, wealth had begun to pass into the hands of people with no tradition behind them. The decadence had set in. Foreign fashions had been established in great houses and institutions; and the merchant class, which was itself imported, looked upon the peasants with scorn, and its members were ashamed, in any case, of anything that resembled emotional fantasy in themselves or in others.

It was among the scholars, the young

students and artists of succeeding generations, that Norwid finally found his following. His cult was strong even before the War within this group; out of it have arisen four or five individuals of intelligence and wisdom who have concentrated upon regions where the traditions have spanned centuries and even ages.

These individuals are specialists, not merely collectors. The private collectors of a generation ago did play a certain part in stimulating the artist of the present to research and specialization. But sporadic efforts on the part of townspeople have amounted in the past only to interference, as those good citizens had not been trained sufficiently to bring about a real development.

Each authentic recruit to the cause of Polish popular art has been a factor in its preservation and continuation. The or-



Henryk Poddebski

*Simple, traditional methods suffice for the maintenance of peasant handicrafts all over Poland; a typical loom is here seen in use in a Polesian cottage. But, for lack of an outlet—*



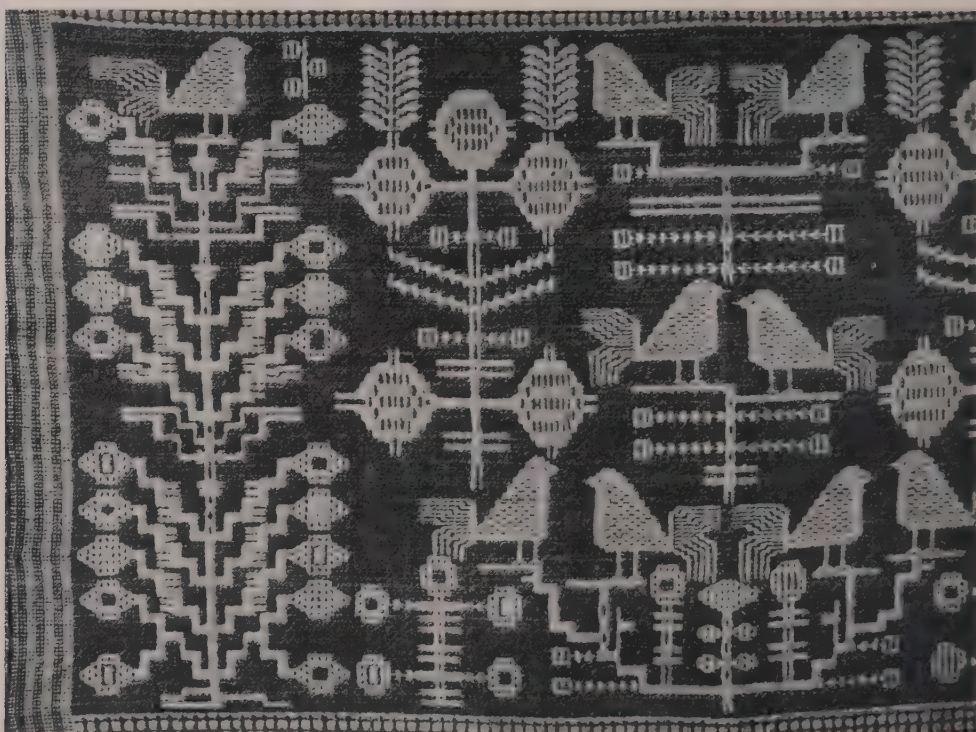


*—they would have succumbed, in a mechanical age, without the help of art in extension to action  
this, one of several shops in Warsaw selling peasant products. (from tomorrow)*

ganization of the People's Bazaars in Vilno a decade or more ago was a convincing step to the peasants; for it brought them not only confirmation of their skill, but also revenue, especially for their woven products. It was in this region that weaving reached a summit of perfection in the 17th century, due to the patronage of the Tyzenhaus family, wealthy nobles living in the neighbouring province of Bialystok, who lavished a fortune upon the enterprise. They in turn had been seduced to their interesting folly by the tradition existing there since flax began to grow and sheep to roam upon those lands.

The association of the People's Bazaars was formed originally for the purpose of buying and selling all sorts of peasant stuffs, including linen thread and sacks for

military and civil purposes. This linen was found to be too good to pack salt and tobacco in, so the managers hit upon the idea that it might be a better paying proposition to let the peasants work out their own ideas and make the kind of things they made a thousand years ago for clothing, draperies and ornamental purposes. As Vilno is a University town and intellectual centre, a society of artists and scientists was finally formed there, led by a renowned ethnologist, Madame Ehrenkreutz-Jedrzejewicz, to fix a standard of quality upon these peasant products. The founder had in her own collection more than 700 hand-woven textiles, no two of which were alike, made by the local artisans from linen or from wool and linen combined. The racial memory of these weavers is full of reverberations. They



Edward Koch

*Lovers of peasant art have scoured the country for hidden talent. An example of a rare weaving technique peculiar to the wooded districts of the north-east, made by Adolf of Grodno*

come to meet the present with the past in their eyes. Vilno, Novogrodek, Bialystok and Polesie, the four provinces of north-eastern Poland, had still to be canvassed to the remotest village for all that remained of the master weavers and their families. It was only four years ago that a remarkable artist-specialist, Madame Eleanora Plutynska, set to work at this task, for which the Society for the Protection of Folk Industry and the People's Bazaars assumed responsibility. Today she and her trained assistants have brought the present home industry of weaving to a standard comparable to that of Scotland. The decorated and coloured linens from one of these provinces are an industry peculiar to Poland alone—nothing like them exists elsewhere.

To effect this triumph of practical organization, the visiting artists have sacrificed personal comfort. They have accepted primitive life for long periods. They have slept in the huts of their peasant hosts and eaten their black bread and *kasza*. They have been awakened at all hours by eager neighbours under their windows who, hearing rumours of their presence, have often spent the night on the road to bring them samples of their own work, or fragments of beautiful old costumes that have been worn or have lain in chests for a century or more. They have been pioneers, facing not only toward a new horizon, but toward the blending of the old civilization with the new.

Madame Plutynska has come upon unexpected discoveries such as Adolf, a



young peasant near Grodno in Bialystok, unhappily apprenticed to his wife and sister in an aniline industry of loom atrocities—weak imitations of the ancient regional speciality—that the women had told him were now fashionable. He had the good sense to perceive a possible ally in the visiting artist, to whom he tentatively expressed his secret disapproval. Thus Adolf got his chance; he was allowed to make two reversible tapestries, choosing his own yarns from undyed and vegetable coloured hand-spun wool, improvising his own subjects and composition as he worked, giving free play to his artistic consciousness. His moment of courage revolutionized his life, for it set him at the head of his family with wife and sister subservient to his command. And now the three of them can hardly

satisfy the demands made upon the little shop opened through the efforts of these artists in Warsaw two years ago.

In another locality they found a sad old woman feeling very uncomfortable in a coat of gaudy, chemical colours. "If I could just have a coat like the one I used to wear—" she murmured. "But that was forty years ago and there are no such colours now." "Perhaps I could get you the colours," the artist replied, "if you would make not only a coat for yourself, but one for me too."

It is in the matter of dyeing that the Polish peasants have sustained the greatest loss of skill and knowledge. With the coming of chemical dyes they deserted the old order for the new, so that now they have to be supplied by their artist patrons with imported natural dyes until they



*Cracow Ethnographical Museum*

*An 18th-century painting on glass, depicting the legend of Janosik, a bandit-hero of the Tatra Mountains and a famous dancer. When captured, he was permitted one last dance before his executioners: at the height of his performance he jumped through the window and disappeared*



Henryk Koddoski

*Everything in a Hucul hut is redolent of the mountain environment: walls of pine logs, rough without, smoothed and polished within; carved beams; wooden mugs and pitchers*

learn to make their own again. The indanthren dyes of post-war production have been found to be more suitable for linens than natural colours, for the colour of the flax is a sort of *écru*, beige or grey, so that it comes out from the dye-bath in softer tones than does the wool, which is pure white in its natural state. Also subtlety of tone is often obtained in linen fabrics by crossing a warp of one colour with a weft of another. There is a great colour specialist in Warsaw who has worked out a special scale of shades for Polesie, based upon those of the old textiles and embroideries of that region. Eventually there are to be distributing centres of dyes in all the districts where the weaving industry is popular.

The Polesians show a fine discretion in the use of these new indanthren colours;

and here again past and present have come together through the introduction of the coloured linen threads for embroidery as well as for woven materials; formerly needles were threaded with cotton (bought at the stores, which the women toned down and made fast afterwards with the juices of oak and alder bark), silk, wool or goat-hair. But now threads, spun from the flax grown in these same villages where the weaving and embroidery is done, take on glossy, fast shades of flame, brick, raspberry, tomato, rust, chestnut and black, and laundering seems only to increase their lustre. The handsomest summer dress materials are made by the Polesian peasants with borders of woven embroidery for trimming. Eventually the talents of the south-eastern mountaineers will be similarly developed. All that is but a



question of time, and the work of organization is still young.

Compared with the refinement of Polesian art the Hucul style is, as I have pointed out, heavy and almost barbaric. Although its utility in contemporary life is confined mostly to summer cottages and chalets, and to sport outfits and costumes, as many as 400 Hucul women are kept busy under wise guidance on the ancient estate called Czervonogród, near Zaleszczyki, embroidering in the traditional manner.

The beauty of ancient woollen tissues depended upon many things: the race of sheep, the method and skill with which the wool was cleansed and prepared, the carding and spinning—all this had to be carefully weighed before the actual weav-

ing began or the design and ornamentation was considered. For the past few years Poland has been importing most of her wool from Australia and the Argentine. But from now on, according to a well-known Polish economist, there will be more sheep in Poland. He declared: "We have to defend ourselves against high meat prices in foreign markets, and learn to eat mutton and lamb like the English. But, no matter for what reason, we shall have sheep, and we will spin and weave."

The government, indeed, was the last element to be mustered to the cause of popular art, and it is a powerful ally. Intensive flax cultivation has been on its programme for the last four or five years—the Vilno region is nearly as fertile as



*Hucul pottery against a tapestry of heavy hempen material, with decorative stripes of dark undyed wool. The Hucul textiles have a bold, massive quality symbolic of the people themselves*



*Ruan*



*Edward Koch*



*Popular art in Poland shows many traces of ancient artistic themes. (Above) Two specimens of Polish pottery in which the 'archaic rhythm' of peasant composition is evident. (Left) Part of a screen of Polish Easter eggs, reminiscent in design of the ancient Greek vase*



those of Latvia, Esthonia, Finland and Russia. There is great preoccupation at present with the improvement in the quality of seed, and from a special station is distributed that best adapted to the Polish climate and requirements; here, too, experiments are being made with hemp and with certain exotic plants. Each year this station puts on an imposing linen show in Warsaw, at which the finest peasant textiles are exhibited and sold by the metre for every kind of domestic purpose from bed sheets to upholstering material; and often they are made up after the designs of the capable artists of the Professional Schools or of *Inicjatywa*, a dressmaking establishment run by graduate designers from the art schools. At the exhibition there are frocks, hats, bags, parasols and all manner of summer paraphernalia for both men and women, showing the infinite possibilities of linen and hemp.

The Polish army is importing sheep and using linen in great quantities. In this way it spends sometimes as much as 10,000,000 zlotys in one year, so that the peasant weaving of Poland is well on the road to making a peaceful conquest of the home market.

One of the highest manifestations of Poland's weaving art reached in the past was in the making of kilims or carpets, dating from the 16th to the 18th and early 19th centuries. Few of these European kilims—not to be confused with the oriental rugs of that name—remain today in the possession of the peasants. They have been bought by the government, by museums and by private collectors. Few, moreover, have found their way abroad; so that their cult is limited almost to a national aesthetic indulgence.

Kilim art flourished above all in the south-eastern territories of the old Polish Commonwealth, where it was the result of the collaboration and community life of Polish manor-folk and Ukrainian peasants. The finest examples resulted from this

interpenetration of Polish and Ruthenian influences, together with those of eastern and western cultures. Born of the people of Podolia, Volhynia and the Ukraine, the earliest kilims now in existence represent the folk art of these regions.

In most districts where suitable clay exists, old women used to fashion jugs and plates with their hands and bake them in their stoves. This was the beginning of the potter's art in Poland. And even today it sometimes happens that the cruder vessels are more pleasing than those well turned by the wheel. Polesie produces rough, but perfectly shaped terracotta water and milk jars, mugs and pitchers,



*Sacweczenki Museum, Lwów*

*A kilim in which Polish and Ukrainian influences have combined with that of the Caucasus, brought by Armenian traders across the Black Sea*

made in the same way, and with the same materials and ornamentation—borders of unglazed red and white—as in prehistoric times. Characteristic of this region, too, is the black, smoked pottery, which is also found in Nadudvar, Hungary; in the Sarthe, France; in Villareal, Portugal; in Silesia and parts of Czechoslovakia.

No one knows where to look for the harvest of the wind-blown seed. Unexpected likenesses in remote and widely separated regions appear repeatedly in the study of popular art. An ancient caravan route reveals, now and then, the key to some teasing mystery. All through the Eastern Carpathians exists a potter's cult that in certain villages remains comparatively pure and unspoiled. Lozenges, broad or diagonal stripes, angles, dots and stiff festoons in green, yellow and brown—these are some of the designs which cover the rich, cream surfaces of Hucul pitchers, bowls, basins and flasks. But the centre of the plate, or any flat dish, is usually ornamented with the figure of a stag, a fish or—derived from a later trend—a cross with stylized foliage to suggest a way-side shrine. The colours are polished and sparkling, and reflect the light like jewels smoothly cut.

Perhaps the Kaszubian pottery, with its high glaze of dull, soft blue, accented with spots of white, dark red, brown, yellow or green, is the next in importance as regards individual character. There is also a native interpretation of a plant like a tulip that appears on most of the pieces. The specialities of the different regions bear little resemblance to one another, for no uniformity of style exists in Polish pottery.

The economic side of the question has played an important part in the regeneration of these rustic arts. The peasants have much free time that they have not been able to use to material advantage.

The work of the men in winter largely depends upon whether or not there is any timber to be cut. In recent years, therefore, since the people have found that they can sell their hand-made products for a fair price, they have become more and more interested in using their native skill. There is great distress in the country because of the keen competition with European markets; and any additional source of income is of much benefit to villages whose industry is suffering because of the small purchasing power of the peasant. These facts serve to lighten the task of the organizing artists and to gain for them the sympathy of the government and other branches of society.

If Poland has been reproached at times, like Ireland, for not pulling together any too well on political issues, she is at least putting before the modern world a great example of co-operation in the matter of her peasant arts.

Popular art, called by Professor Henri Focillon of the Sorbonne 'the oldest aspect of human reverie', is one of the newest preoccupations of the scientists, who are engaged not only in seeking an explanation of its origin, but also in determining what relation, if any, it can bear to the present and the future.

There is not, and there never can be, anything approaching mass production of peasant art and home industry. Nevertheless, a country possessed of such treasure is like a host, sure of his background and position in life, whose security permits him to share what he has and represents with others. Thanks to the most intelligent of native artists and scholars, and in some measure to favourable circumstances, the popular art of Poland—especially that of weaving—is demonstrating its ability to find a place in a largely mechanized world by expressing itself in forms that are universal and, therefore, in demand.



# Outside the Fold

## II. The Road to the Adriatic

by JOHN LEHMANN

*The German-speaking minority in Yugoslavia numbers about 500,000, mainly inhabiting the districts north of Belgrade. One group, however, forms an island at Kočevje (Gottschee) in Slovenia, where their ancestors settled in the 14th century. The second article in our series on the German-speaking minorities of Central Europe, outside the present frontiers of the Reich, relates to this group*

*(Pronounce č like tch; j like y; š like sh; and ž like s in 'measure')*

WHEN the German troops marched into Austria in March 1938, it was not only the Hungarians and the Italians who suddenly found themselves rubbing shoulders with an enormous and dynamic national State stretching to the Rhine and the Baltic, but also the South Slavs. Where the frontier line cuts the rich and sunny plain south of Graz, the columns of the German army appeared, gazing down into what once had been South Styria, an Austrian pro-

vince. Up the slopes of the Karawanken they climbed, and from the ancient gates that stand at the top of the Loibl Pass could strain their eyes through the haze and fancy they saw, over the heads of the Yugoslav frontier guards, what the empire-builders of the north had always longed to see—the Adriatic.

The Yugoslavs had to do some hard thinking. Ever since the war the centre theme of their policy had been to prevent



*(Compiled from material contained in maps published by the General Staff, War Office, in 1918)*

a restoration of the Habsburgs in Vienna or Budapest and all the dangers of revisionism it might bring with it. No Habsburg protestation of sweet reasonableness and reformed ways impressed them; rather, they were sometimes heard to say, the *Anschluss* than their old oppressors back again, though in their hearts they might obstinately hope that truncated Austria's chronic problem would find a third solution.

But when, in a night, the *Anschluss* was there, reality did not look quite as comfortable as they had liked to imagine. The Habsburgs were eliminated now, probably for ever, but instead of Habsburg revisionism the clamour of a new revisionism suddenly made itself heard on their borders: *Ein Volk! Ein Reich!* All Germans in one great Empire together! And weren't there, on the German propaganda maps, a disquieting number of German-speaking islands heavily marked in Slovenia, particularly between the Carinthian frontier and the so-much-coveted sea?

In August—the blackest peace-time August since 1914, people were saying—I was sitting with friends one evening in a

restaurant in Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, and discussing just these anxious themes. A pedlar came in and attracted my attention, because, unlike the Dalmatian pedlars who swarm through the country, he carried no tray overflowing with cheap combs, braces, brooches and a hundred other knick-knacks, but simply a cardboard box containing chocolate bars and sweets, and a small leather bag.

As he came up to our table, one of my friends recognized him: what luck for me, she cried, here in the flesh was a native from one of the biggest German 'islands' in Slovenia—or indeed in the whole of south-eastern Europe—a pedlar from Gottschee, which had sent out German pedlars, with their own particular 'line', for generations. He smiled, rather wearily, when he saw our foreign curiosity aroused, and persuaded us to spend a few dinars on his speciality, a 'raffle' of the chocolates, while he answered our questions. No, he said, he was not the only one from Gottschee in Ljubljana at that moment. He had two fellow-pedlars, and all three stayed permanently in the town. In winter, too—Gottschee was dismal in winter. Some, of course, went much further afield, to Croatia, and even to Hungary. Business was bad, but they rubbed along somehow. It was all night-work, through the restaurants, cafés and bars, and they never got up before the afternoon. Had I ever seen Gottschee, he asked? No?—then I certainly should pay it a visit. There was, he believed, some kind of sports festival there next Sunday, and though it was only a Slovene affair it might be amusing for us. He handed my friend a small packet of chocolate as her winnings, and with a murmured compliment passed on.

The 'Slovene' affair turned out on inquiry to be a meeting of the local Sokol organization for the whole district of which Gottschee is the centre, to celebrate the building of a new Sokol house and sports ground. It surprised me a little to hear of a Slovene demonstration







*Žužemberk (Seisenberg), one of the castles in Slovenia from which the old Teutonic aristocracy dominated the Slavs of the countryside and defied, for long centuries, the armies of the Turks*

at that moment in a predominantly German area, but it also added considerably to my interest. Next Sunday morning found us driving down south, with the long-distance signposts pointing to Sušak and the sea, on our way to Gottschee, or Kočevje as the Yugoslav maps described it.

There are few more lovely landscapes in the south of Europe than this north-western corner of Yugoslavia, ancient Carniola. The undulating limestone hills rise to luminous mountain ridges in the far background; and on the hilltops little baroque chapels alternate with the ruined castles, clinging about the rock like some natural growth, of the old Teutonic aristocracy. Sometimes their walls are half hidden by the climbing ranks of the pine-forests; and through the gorges and the shallower clefts transparent streams twist and tumble noisily down towards the rich green pastures.

On that Sunday in August hay was hung out to yellow on great racks by the wooden barns, where peasants moved lazily about among the hens and the pale buff cows. Orchards we passed, and here and there vineyards, varying the pastures and the maize-fields; and then, as we spiralled out of the valley, piled logs and planks and chip-strewn clearings in the woods, that reminded us how vital a part the timber trade played in the life of the country.

As we drove on through the steadily increasing glare and heat of the morning, my friends discussed with me the district we were going to see. Gottschee, I gathered, with the surrounding villages for which it formed the administrative centre, was about 830 square kilometres in size. The original German settlers consisted of about 300 families, rebels sent out in the 14th century from Carinthia and Thuringia by the Emperor Charles V to Graf Ortenberg, who was at that time

already a rich landowner in Carniola. They were poor people, who adopted Slovenian dress, and even Slovenian folk melodies, very soon, but jealously preserved their German speech: even today their dialect is one of the most archaic known.

The land they were banished to might be potentially fertile, but the Emperor had not planned to offer his rebels a paradise: it was a dangerous frontier they were on, for just to the south of Gottschee came the Turkish outposts, and the soldiers of Islam were for ever making raids upon their farms, burning and slaughtering. It was thus that they were gradually reduced to a state of extreme poverty, and in their despair applied for permission to travel about the countryside as pedlars. That was in the 16th century; our pedlar in the restaurant of Ljubljana represented a tradition of nearly four hundred years.

There have always been Slovenes living with the Germans in Gottschee. Before the war, under the Habsburg administration, the pressure of Germanization was very great, its main instruments being the *Deutscher Schulverein Südmark* and the German landowners, who were, according to the Slovenes, in nearly every case of strong Pan-German sympathies. With no single school in the Gottschee district giving even an hour's instruction in the Slovene language, it is little wonder that many of the Slavs became denationalized; it is more of a wonder that nearly 40 per cent, out of a total population of just over 18,000 had, according to the 1931 census, remained purely Slovene in speech and tradition.

To any one who suspects the Slovenes of improving the true figures to their own advantage, they retort that as a matter of fact the census was run by municipal and rural district councils with a German majority; and that according to their own private figures, reckoned by origin and not by speech, there were 3000 half-Slavs

among the Germans, and a further 2500 who had at least some Slav blood. They point, too, as evidence of a more liberal attitude on their part towards minority questions, to the existence in Gottschee district of twenty-one German sections in sixteen schools and eight purely German teachers. The Germans, however, accustomed before the war to preferential treatment, make much of the complaint that there is only German instruction up to the third class of the *Volksschule*, and that any Germans who want to go further with their education must learn Slovene.

Times change, and estimation changes to suit policy: already before the war these one-time banished rebels had become a privileged layer of the population in Vienna's Slav dominions. And now, for the new German Empire at their gates, they are the precious upholders of the German tradition, outposts of *Deutschum* within the enemy's country—and the 'enemy' in modern times is racial (the Slav world) where it was once religious (Islam). But how long within the enemy's country? This is a question the Gottschee Germans ask themselves more and more frequently now, as they hear the approaching tide of Pan-Germanism.

Since Hitler came to power, the Slovenes maintain that a powerful pro-German imperialist propaganda has developed, through German tourists and wandering students from the Reich, and the coaching of all Gottschee natives who go to the Reich in ideas of *Gesamtdeutschland*. Germans own many of the big industries in Slovenia also, and through their strawmen are continually buying up land. But—for the moment—no tension exists, no hatred is worked up, and official Yugoslavia is on the best of terms with official Germany.

We were coming at last to villages where German names appeared, written up beside the Slovene, and here and there an obvious German face emerged from a shop or turned to stare vaguely at our



John Lehmann

*'We crossed a bridge over a still stretch of water . . . ' Two Slovene girls of Gottschee are seen, in national costume, on their way to join the Sokol procession*

English number-plates at the road's edge. A few minutes later we had arrived in Gottschee village itself, lying under the shadow of a steep and thickly wooded ridge on the western side.

The first thing we saw was huge piles of unsawn logs and planks in the yard of a sawmill between the village and the ridge; then after crossing a bridge over a still stretch of water covered with pale green weed and water-lilies, where neat private gardens filled with flowers and inn gardens with tables under shady trees and bright umbrellas, came right down to the banks, we drew up by the porch of the church. Just across the road, my friends pointed out the chief beauty of Gottschee: the ancient town hall, through the massive stone archway of which I caught a glimpse of a sun-filled courtyard with creeper fall-

ing over the warm-welcoming colonnades, whose pattern was repeated in the storeys piled above them.

We went in search of lunch, and discovered not far away a peaceful *Gasthaus* garden with a large Alsatian basking in the sunniest corner. The innkeeper, a tall, dark young man with a friendly smile, was sitting with his wife and younger sister at one of the tables, and greeted us in a soft German, certain at least that we were not Slovene. *Wiener Schnitzel* were brought us, and a carafe of sourish Gottschee wine. While we ate, he stood near at hand, fondling the Alsatian, and talked with us.

The mines of Gottschee, he told us, were no longer as important as they used to be, employing under 100 workers where they once employed up to four figures: times



## SLAVS DEMONSTRATE



*John Lehmann*

*'The older men in the handsome Sokol uniform, symbol of inter-Slav unity . . .'*



*John Lehmann*

*'After them came the young athletes in sports kit, first of all the girls . . .'*



*'Cheers were exchanged, roses were thrown, caught up and waved triumphantly . . .'*

# GERMANS KEEP QUIET

*'The innkeeper was sitting with his wife and sister at one of the tables . . .'*



*John Lehn*

*'The Germans, obvious in their dirndl, took a walk on the other side of the village . . .'*



*John Lehn*

*'... or retired to the cafés to read the papers from Vienna and Berlin'*





were bad. There were German workers among them, but most were Slovenes or Croats—and the same was true of the timber industry. He made it clear that he implied no unfair racial discrimination by this, for it had always been so, the Germans preferring other ways of earning their living. Nevertheless, I wondered whether it was fanciful of me to imagine there was a discreet suggestion in his remarks that in other countries near at hand no unemployment problem existed for Germans. We asked him about the Sokol demonstration, and he told us to hurry, as the procession would pass any moment. He pointed out the way to the square from which we could get the best view, and bowed a courteous good-bye to us.

The procession, sure enough, began to arrive with band playing, banners waving and much cheering, as soon as we had reached the square. After the band came a crowd of women and children in gay Slovene national costume, then the older men in the handsome Sokol uniform, symbol of inter-Slav unity for generations, bright red shirts and grey trousers and grey jackets slung over one shoulder, the close-fitting cap with the tall feather in it. After them came the young athletes in sports kit, first the girls, then the boys: shouts and cheers were exchanged with the onlookers on the kerb and leaning out of the windows, roses were thrown, caught up and waved triumphantly. They made a brave showing as they disappeared round the corner onto the sports ground, and the few Germans who happened to be watching, obvious in their Styrian suits or *dirndl*, seemed to enjoy it with good-humoured reserve; but many, I gathered later, had gone off into the country on expeditions, or took a family walk on the other side of the village, or retired to the cafés to read the papers from Vienna and Berlin.

We followed them onto the sports ground, where they were assembled in a

forest of gold and crimson banners, listening to an address from the leader of the local Sokols. My friends whispered to me that he was urging on them the importance of their movement at this hour of danger, even hinting that Belgrade was not offering all the support it should: prominently displayed was the Czech flag.

Then the sports themselves began, exercises to music of a surprising beauty by all contingents in turn, and a star-piece in rolling wheels by four youths, specially chosen as pure blond Slovene types. The wheels had been late in reaching Gottschee, there had been only two days to rehearse, and there were roars of delight and clapping when the wheels seemed to take charge and perform unexpected antics independently of the perspiring boys inside.

It was getting late; we had dates to keep in Ljubljana, and began to move off. I could not help feeling that we had seen more Slav than Teuton on our expedition, and thinking what a provocation such a Sokol demonstration would have been considered away up in Sudetenland, particularly at that moment of acute international tension.

As we climbed into our car, a peasant woman with a cheerful, intelligent face wrapped in a white spotted kerchief, stopped and studied us with interest. She was clearly German, but when we called across to her she answered in an accent that seemed to me a little different from what I had heard the villagers use among themselves. "Yes, I'm German", she said when we questioned her, "but not from here. Nearly twenty years I've lived in Gottschee, but I come from the Burgenland, and I knew Vienna when I was young." "And how do the Germans get on with the Slovenes here?" "Like cats and dogs," was her prompt answer, "but they're all as bad as one another. I've had enough of them. Give me the Prater and a couple of *gemütliche Wiener* to crack jokes with—and a litre of Grinzing wine."



# PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTES

Edited by F. S. Smythe

## 24. EXPOSURE EXPLAINED (4)

Brilliance, illumination, brightness and quality are the primary factors of light with which the photographer has to deal when judging exposure. No adjustment of stop and shutter speed is, however, of any value unless the type of film with which the camera is loaded is also taken into consideration.

In 1873, orthochromatic films were hailed as an advance upon the original untreated bromide emulsions because they were sensitive not only to violet and blue light, but also to the centre of the spectrum, which includes green. Today, the manufacturers of panchromatic material vie with one another to adjust the colour sensitivity of their films in relation to a 'popular' idea of the 'importance' of different colours.

To some people, some colours are more noticeable than others—for example, red. In the red, white and blue of the Union Jack, it is the red which many people would notice first if the flag were viewed from far away. Beginning with red then, when designing a panchromatic emulsion, we might instruct our chemist to give full prominence to red and to make the emulsion highly sensitive to all shades of this colour. Then the trouble would begin. On seeing the result, someone else might argue that blue was more important and that it is the blue in the Union Jack which is the most noticeable colour.

This subtle adjustment of the colour-rendering qualities of panchromatic film is an extremely interesting branch of photographic science—yet another branch of this science in which the scientist must work hand in hand with the artist. As a photographer, however, you can take advantage of the qualities of a panchromatic film and adjust the colour-rendering to your own impression of the scene by means of filters. As long as you

have had sufficient experience with the film to know and understand its colour-rendering qualities, an intelligent use of filters will put right any of the film's deficiencies—as you see them. For example, the photographer who believed that the blue of the Union Jack

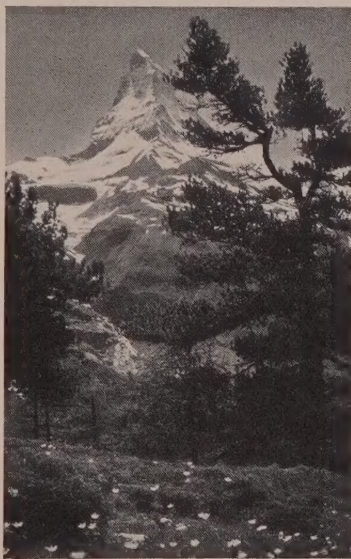
was observed sooner than the red, could very easily throw up the blue in a photograph of the flag by filtering out the red with the appropriate filter, even though the film had been designed to give full value to red.

A generous use of filters is, of course, apt to slow down photography. Even at wide apertures, if you start filtering out blues, even with the fastest of panchromatic films, your shutter speed must in most cases be more than halved—or, in other words, the exposure more than doubled.

The amount by which the exposure is increased when using a filter is known as the 'filter factor' and is usually printed either on the side of the metal ring containing the filter or on the box in which the filter is packed.

It must be kept in mind that when speaking of exposure it is just as absurd to say 'I gave an exposure of  $1/25$ th of a second' without adding at what aperture, as to say 'I gave  $1/25$ th of a second at f.11' without adding with which film. Lack of any mention of filters is generally assumed to mean that none was used.

With a universal system of film speed markings an exposure formula giving shutter speed, stop, film speed and filter factor would prove invaluable. When reporting an exposure a photographer could write quite simply the following figures:  $25/8/27/2\frac{1}{2}$ —meaning that the picture was taken with a shutter speed of  $1/25$ th of a second at f.8 on a film with a speed of 27 degrees 'Universal Speed Rating' and with a filter having a factor of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ .



*Only by an intelligent use of Panchromatic film and the correct filters can the mists of mountain regions be overcome by the camera and the highly actinic blue of the sky rendered in a darker shade than the whiteness of the mountain snows*



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